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THEOCRITUS.

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Cambridge:
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THEOCRITUS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

I HAD intended translating all or nearly all these Idylls into blank verse, as the natural equivalent of Greek or of Latin hexameters; only deviating into rhyme where occasion seemed to demand it. But I found that other metres had their special advantages: the fourteen-syllable line in particular has that, among others, of containing about the same number of syllables as an ordinary line of Theocritus. And there is also no doubt something gained by variety.

Several recent writers on the subject have laid down that every translation of Greek poetry, especially bucolic poetry, must be in rhyme of some sort. But they have seldom stated, and it is hard to see, why. There is no rhyme in the original, and *primâ facie* should be none in the translation. Professor Blackie has, it is

true, pointed out the “assonances, alliterations, and rhymes,” which are found in more or less abundance in Ionic Greek.* These may of course be purely accidental, like the hexameters in Livy or the blank-verse lines in Mr. Dickens’s prose: but accidental or not (it may be said) they are there, and ought to be recognised. May we not then recognise them by introducing similar assonances, etc. here and there into the English version? or by availing ourselves of what Professor Blackie again calls attention to, the “compensating powers”† of English? I think with him that it was hard to speak of our language as one which “transforms *boos megaloiō boeién* into ‘great ox’s hide.’” Such phrases as ‘The Lord is a man of war,’ ‘The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,’ are to my ear quite as grand as Homer: and it would be equally fair to ask what we are to make of a language which transforms Milton’s line into ἡ σάλπιγξ οὐ προσέφη τὸν ὠπλισμένον ὄχλον. But be this as it may, these phenomena are surely too

* BLACKIE’S *Homer*, Vol. I., pp. 413, 414.

† *Ibid.*, page 377, etc.

rare and too arbitrary to be adequately represented by any regularly recurring rhyme: and the question remains, what is there in the unrhymed original to which rhyme answers?

To me its effect is to divide the verse into couplets, triplets, or (if the word may include them all) *stanzas* of some kind. Without rhyme we have no apparent means of conveying the effect of stanzas. There are of course devices such as repeating a line or part of a line at stated intervals, as is done in 'Tears, idle tears' and elsewhere: but clearly none of these would be available to a translator. Where therefore he has to express stanzas, it is easy to see that rhyme may be admissible and even necessary. Pope's couplet may (or may not) stand for elegiacs, and the *In Memoriam* stanza for some one of Horace's metres. Where the heroes of Virgil's Eclogues sing alternately four lines each, Gray's quatrain seems to suggest itself: and where a similar case occurs in these Idylls (as for instance in the ninth) I thought it might be met by taking whatever received English stanza was nearest the required length. Pope's couplet again may possibly best convey the pomposity of some Idylls and the

point of others. And there may be divers considerations of this kind. But, speaking generally, where the translator has not to intimate stanzas—where he has on the contrary to intimate that there are none—rhyme seems at first sight an intrusion and a *suggestio falsi*.

No doubt (as has been observed) what ‘Pastorals’ we have are mostly written in what is called the heroic measure. But the reason is, I suppose, not far to seek. Dryden and Pope wrote ‘heroics,’ not from any sense of their fitness for bucolic poetry, but from a sense of their universal fitness: and their followers of course copied them. But probably no scholar would affirm that any poem, original or translated, by Pope or Dryden or any of their school, really resembles in any degree the bucolic poetry of the Greeks. Mr. Morris, whose poems appear to me to resemble it more almost than anything I have ever seen, of course writes what is technically Pope’s metre, and equally of course is not of Pope’s school. Whether or no Pope and Dryden *intended* to resemble the old bucolic poets in style is, to say the least, immaterial. If they did not, there is no reason whatever why any of us

who do should adopt their metre: if they did and failed, there is every reason why we should select a different one.

Professor Conington has adduced one cogent argument against blank verse: that is, that hardly any of us can write it.* But if this is so—if the ‘blank verse’ which we write is virtually prose in disguise—the addition of rhyme would only make it rhymed prose, and we should be as far as ever from “verse really deserving the name.”† Unless (which I can hardly imagine) the mere incident of ‘terminal consonance’ can constitute that verse which would not be verse independently, this argument is equally good against attempting verse of any kind: we should still be writing disguised, and had better write undisguised, prose. Prose translations are of course tenable, and are (I am told) advocated by another very eminent critic. These considerations against them occur to one: that, among the characteristics of his original which the translator is bound to preserve, one is that he wrote metrically; and that the prattle which passes

* Preface to CONINGTON'S *Æneid*, page ix.

† *Ibid.*

muster, and sounds perhaps rather pretty than otherwise, in metre, would in plain prose be insufferable. Very likely some exceptional sort of prose may be meant, which would dispose of all such difficulties: but this would be harder for an ordinary writer to evolve out of his own brain, than to construct any species of verse for which he has at least a model and a precedent.

These remarks are made to shew that my metres were not selected, as it might appear, at hap-hazard. Metre is not so unimportant as to justify that. For the rest, I have used Briggs's edition (*Poete Bucolici Græci*), and have never, that I am aware of, taken refuge in any various reading where I could make any sense at all of the text as given by him. Sometimes I have been content to put down what I felt was a wrong rendering rather than omit; but only in cases where the original was plainly corrupt, and all suggested emendations seemed to me hopelessly wide of the mark. What, for instance, may be the true meaning of *βολβός τις κοχλίας* in the fourteenth Idyll I have no idea. It is not very important. And no doubt the sense of the last two lines of the "*Death*

of *Adonis*" is very unlikely to be what I have made it. But no suggestion that I met with seemed to me satisfactory or even plausible: and in this and a few similar cases I have put down what suited the context. Occasionally also, as in the *Idyll* here printed last—the one lately discovered by Bergk, which I elucidated by the light of Fritzsche's conjectures—I have availed myself of an opinion which Professor Conington somewhere expresses, to the effect that, where two interpretations are tenable, it is lawful to accept for the purposes of translation the one you might reject as a commentator. *τετορταῖος* has I dare say nothing whatever to do with 'quartan fever.'

On one point, rather a minor one, I have ventured to dissent from Professor Blackie and others: namely, in retaining the Greek, instead of adopting the Roman, nomenclature. Professor Blackie says* that there are some men by whom "it is esteemed a grave offence to call Jupiter Jupiter," which begs the question: and that Jove "is much more musical" than Zeus, which begs another. Granting (what might be questioned) that *Zeus*, *Aphrodite*, and *Eros* are as absolutely the

* BLACKIE'S *Homer*, Preface, pp. xii., xiii.

same individuals with *Jupiter*, *Venus*, and *Cupid* as *Odysseus* undoubtedly is with *Ulysses*—still I cannot see why, in making a version of (say) Theocritus, one should not use by way of preference those names by which he invariably called them, and which are characteristic of him: why, in turning a Greek author into English, we should begin by turning all the proper names into Latin. Professor Blackie's authoritative statement* that "there are whole idylls in Theocritus which would sound ridiculous in any other language than that of Tam o' Shanter" I accept of course unhesitatingly, and should like to see it acted upon by himself or any competent person. But a translator is bound to interpret all as best he may: and an attempt to write Tam o' Shanter's language by one who was not Tam o' Shanter's countryman would, I fear, result in something more ridiculous still.

* BLACKIE'S *Homer*, Vol. I., page 384.

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IDYLL I.

The Death of Daphnis.

THYRSIS. A GOATHERD.

THYRSIS.

SWEET are the whispers of yon pine that makes
Low music o'er the spring; and, Goatherd, sweet
Thy piping; thou art matched by Pan alone.
Is his the hornèd ram? then thine the goat.
Is his the goat? to thee shall fall the kid;
And toothsome is the flesh of un milked kids.

GOATHERD.

Shepherd, thy lay is as the noise of streams
That plain-ward fall and fall from yon high hill.
If for their meed the Muses claim the ewe,
Be thine the stall-fed lamb; or if they choose
The lamb, take thou the scarce less-valued ewe.

THYRSIS.

Pray, by the Nymphs, pray, Goatherd, seat thee here

Against this hill-slope in the tamarisk shade,
And pipe me somewhat, while I guard thy goats.

GOATHERD.

10 I durst not, Shepherd, O I durst not pipe
At noontide; fearing Pan, who at that hour
Rests from the toils of hunting. Harsh is he;
Wrath at his nostrils aye sits sentinel.
But, Thyrsis, thou canst tell of Daphnis' woes;
20 High is thy name for woodland minstrelsy:
Then rest we in the shadow of the elm
Fronting Priapus and the Fountain-nymphs.
There, where the oaks are and the Shepherd's seat,
Sing as thou sang'st erewhile, when matched with him
Of Libya, Cromis; and I'll give thee, first,
30 A goat that yields milk thrice—she suckles twins,
Yet ne'ertheless can fill two milkpails full;—
Next, a deep drinking-cup, with sweet wax scoured,
Two-handled, newly carven, smacking yet
O' the chisel. Ivy reaches up and climbs,
40 Gilded with blossom-dust, about its lip;
Round which a woodbine wreathes herself and flaunts
Her saffron fruitage. Framed therein appears
A damsel ('tis a miracle of art)
In robe and snood: and suitors at her side
With locks fair-flowing, on her right and left,

3 5 Battle with words, that fail to reach her heart.
 She, laughing, glances now on this, flings now
 Her chance regards on that: they, all for love
 Wearied and eye-swoln, find their labour lost.
 Carven elsewhere an ancient fisher stands

4 0 On the rough rocks: thereto the old man with pains
 Drags his great casting-net, as one that toils
 Full stoutly: every fibre of his frame

5 5 Seems fishing; so about the gray-beard's neck
 (In might a stripling yet) the sinews swell.

4 5 Hard by that wave-beat sire a vineyard bends
 Beneath its graceful load of burnished grapes;
 A boy sits on the rude fence watching them.
 Near him two foxes: up and down the vines
 One ranges, pilfering sweets, and one assails

5 0 With every wile his scrip, to leave him soon
 Stranded and supperless. He plaits meanwhile
 With ears of corn a right fine locust-trap,
 And fits it on a rush: for vines, for scrip,
 Little cares he, enamoured of his toy.

5 5 The cup is hung all round with lissom briar,
 Triumph of Æolian art, a wondrous sight.

It was a ferryman's of Calydon:

A goat it cost me, and a great white cheese.

And therewith I will grace thee, nothing loth,

6 5 If for my sake thou'lt sing the lay I love.

Come earn it, lad, and welcome. Thou may'st not
Take thy songs with thee to the Silent Land.

THYRSIS [*sings*].

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

'Tis Thyrsis asks, I, Thyrsis of the Hill.

Where were ye, Nymphs, oh where, while Daphnis
pined?

In fair Peneüs' or in Pindus' glens?

For great Anapus' stream was not your haunt,

Nor Ætna's cliff, nor Acis' sacred rill.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

O'er him the wolves, the jackals howled o'er him;

The lion in the oak-copse mourned his death.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

The kine and oxen stood around his feet,

The heifers and the calves wailed all for him.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

First from the mountain Hermes came, and said,

"Daphnis, who frets thee? Lad, whom lov'st thou so?"

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

Came herdsmen, shepherds came, and goatherds came;

All asked what ailed the lad. Priapus came

And said, "Why pine, poor Daphnis? while the maid

Foots it round every pool and every grove,

(Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song)

“To seek thee, who art love-distraught and froward;
 A goatherd miscalled herdsman! For with eyes
 That yearn, the goatherd sees his kids at play
 And longs to be a kid; and so whene'er
 A maiden laughs, dim grow those eyes of thine
 With yearning to partake her revelry.”

Still nought the herdsman said: he drained alone
 His bitter portion, till the fatal end.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

Came Aphrodite, smiles on her sweet face,
 (Sly smiles,) yet heavy-hearted, and she spake:
 “So, Daphnis, thou must try a fall with Love!
 But sturdy Love hath won the fall of thee.”

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

Then “Ruthless Aphrodite,” Daphnis said,
 “Accursed Aphrodite, foe to man!
 Say'st thou mine hour is come, my sun hath set?
 Dead as alive, shall Daphnis work Love woe.”

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

“Fly to Mount Ida, where the swain (men say)
 And Aphrodite to Anchises fly:
 There are oak-forests; here but galingale,
 And bees that make a music round the hives.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

“Adonis owed his bloom to tending flocks
 And smiting hares, and bringing wild beasts down.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

“Face once more Diomed: tell him ‘I have slain
The herdsman Daphnis; now I challenge thee.’

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

“Ye wolves, ye lynxes, and ye bears that range
The mountain, fare ye well! Ye’ll see no more,
Not in the oak-grove, not in glade or glen,
Your Daphnis! Arethusa, fare thee well,
And the sweet streams that roll down Thymbris’ steep.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

“See no more Daphnis, who leads here his kine,
Brings here to drink his oxen and his calves.

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

“Pan, Pan, oh whether great Lyceum’s crags
Thou haunt’st to-day, or mightier Mænalus,
Come to the Sicel isle! Abandon now
Rhium and Helice, and the mountain-grave
(That e’en gods cherish) of Lycaon’s son!

Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.

“Come, monarch! Hither bring thy waxen pipe,
That windeth sweet as honey round thy lips,
For surely I am torn from life by Love.

Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.

“From thicket now and thorn let violets spring,
Now let white lilies drape the juniper,
And pines grow figs, and nature all go wrong:

For Daphnis dies. Let deer pursue the hounds,
And mountain-owls outsing the nightingale.

Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song."

So spake he, and he never spake again.
And Aphrodite would have raised his head;
But all his thread of life was spun ere now.
So in the stream plunged Daphnis. Styx's wave
Whelmed the Nymphs' darling and the Muses' friend.

Now give me goat and cup; that I may milk
The one, and pour the other to the Muse.
Fare ye well, Muses, o'er and o'er farewell!
I'll sing strains sweeter yet in days to be.

GOATHERD.

Thyrsis, let honey and the honeycomb
Fill thy sweet mouth, and figs of Aigilus:
For ne'er cicala sang so sweet a song.
Here is the cup: mark, friend, how sweet it smells:
The Hours, thou'lt say, have washed it in their well.
Come here, Cissætha! Thou, go milk her! Kids,
Be steady, or your pranks will rouse the ram.

IDYLL II.

The Sorceress.

WHERE are the bay-leaves, Thestylis, and the charms?

Fetch all; with fair red lambswool wreathe the cup;
Let glamour win me back my false lord's heart!

Twelve days the wretch hath not come nigh to me,
Nor made enquiry if I die or live,

Nor had the grace to clamour at my door.

Sure his swift fancy wanders otherwhere,
The slave of Aphrodite and of Love.

I'll off to Timægetus' wrestling-school

At dawn, that I may see him and denounce

His doings; but I'll charm him now with charms.

So shine out fair, O moon! To thee I sing

My soft low song: to thee and Hecate

The dweller in the shades, at whose approach

E'en the dogs quake, as on she moves through blood
And darkness and the barrows of the slain.

All hail, dread Hecate: companion me

Unto the end, and work me witcheries

Potent as Circe or Medea wrought,

Or Perimede of the golden hair!

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.

First we ignite the grain. Nay, pile it on:
Where are thy wits flown, timorous Thestylis?
Am I thy loathing and thy laughing-stock?
Pile, and still say, 'This pile is of his bones.'

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.

Delphis racks me: I burn him in these bays.
As, flame-enkindled, they lift up their voice,
Blaze once, and not a trace is left behind:
So waste his flesh to powder in you fire!

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.

E'en as I melt, not uninspired, the wax,
May Mindian Delphis melt this hour with love:
And, swiftly as this brazen ball whirls round,
May Aphrodite whirl him to my door.

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.

Next burn the husks. O Artemis, thou canst move 33
Hell's adamantine floor and aught that else
Stands stedfast!—Thestylis, hark! I hear the dogs
Howl up and down the city: Hecate
Is surely in the cross-roads: sound the gongs.

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.

Hushed are the voices of the winds and seas;
But O not hushed the voice of my despair.
He burns my being up, who left me here
Unwifed, unmaidened, in my misery.

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.
 Thrice I pour out; speak thrice, sweet mistress, thus:
 "What face soe'er hangs o'er him be forgot
 Clean as, in Dias, Theseus (legends say)
 Forgot his Ariadne's locks of love."

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.
 The coltsfoot grows in Arcady, the weed
 That drives the mountain-colts and swift mares wild.
 Like them may Delphis rave: so, maniac-wise,
 Race from his burnished brethren home to me.

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.
 52 He lost this tassel from his robe; which I
 Shred thus, and cast it on the raging flames.
 Ah baleful Love! why, like the marsh-born leech,
 Cling to my flesh, and drain my dark veins dry?

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.
 From a crushed newt tomorrow he shall drink
 Death! But now, Thestylis, take these herbs and smear
 That threshold o'er, whereto at heart I cling
 Still, still—albeit he thinks scorn of me—
 And spit, and say, "'Tis Delphis' bones I smear.'

Turn, magic wheel, and draw my hero home.

Now, all alone, I'll weep a love when born?
 How gendered? Whence arose my misery?
 Basket in hand, Eubulus' daughter came,

Anaxo, to the grove of Artemis:
Bound for the festival, troops of forest beasts
Stood round, and in the midst a lioness.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

Theucharile, the sainted Thracian nurse,
(My next-door neighbour) prayed me and implored
To see the pageant: I, mistaken fool,
Went with her, trailing a fine silken train,
And gathering round me Clearista's robe.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

And, even as I crossed the mid-highway
By Lycon's farm, I saw them hand in hand,
Delphis and Eudamippus. On they came,
With beards that rivalled the laburnum's gold, 78
And breasts more sheeny than thyself, O Moon,
Fresh from the stern delights of tournament.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

I saw, I raved, smit (weakling) to my heart.
My beauty withered, and I cared no more
For all that pomp; and how I gained my home
I know not: some strange fever wasted me.
Ten nights and days I lay upon my bed.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love. 87

And oftentimes my skin became as woad,
And all my hair streamed off, and there was left
But bones and skin. Whose threshold crossed I not,

Or missed what grandam's hut who dealt in charms?
But ease I gat not; and the time fled on.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

At last I spake the truth to this my maid:
"Find, if thou canst, some cure for my sore pain.
Alas, I am all the Mindian's! But begone,
And watch by Timægetus' wrestling-school:
There doth he haunt, there soothly take his rest.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

"And, taking note when he goes forth abroad,
Make him dumb signals: say 'Simætha waits;
And bring him.'" So I spake: she went her way,
And brought the lustrous-limbed one to my roof.
And I, the instant I beheld him step
Lightfooted o'er the threshold of my door,

(O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love,)

Became all cold like snow, and from my brow
Brake the damp dewdrops: utterance I had none,
Not e'en such utterance as a babe may make
That babbles to its mother in its dreams;
But all my fair frame stiffened into wax.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

112 He eyed me without mercy; then looked down,
And sate him on my couch, and sitting, said:
"Thou hast gained on me, Simætha, (e'en as I
Gained once on young Philinus in the race,)

Bidding me hither ere I came unasked.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

“For I had come—by Eros I had come—
This night, with comrades twain or may-be more,
The fruitage of the Wine-god in my robe,
And, wound about my brow with ribands red,
The silver leaves so dear to Heracles.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

“Had ye said ‘Enter,’ ye’d have blessed the day;
For lithe and bonny in all eyes am I:
One kiss from that sweet mouth had made me calm.
But had the door been barred, and I thrust out,
With brand and axe would I have stormed ye then.

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

“Now be my thanks recorded, first to Love, 130
Next to thee, lady, who didst pluck me out,
A half-burned helpless creature, from the flames,
And bad’st me hither. It is Love that lights
A fire more fierce than his of Lipara;

O tell me, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

“Scares, mischief-mad, the maiden from her bower,
The bride from her warm couch.” He spake: and I,
A willing listener, sat, my hand in his,
Among the cushions, and his cheek touched mine,
Each hotter than its wont, and we discoursed
In soft low language. Need I prate to thee,

Sweet Moon, of all we said and all we did?
 Till yesterday he found no fault with me,
 Nor I with him. But lo, to-day there came
 Philista's mother—hers who flutes to me—
 With her Melampo's; just when up the sky
 i47 Gallop the mares that chariot rose-limbed Dawn:
 And divers tales she brought me, with the rest
 How Delphis loved, she knew not rightly whom:
 But certes it had ended in his flight,
 (So steeped was he in passion's alcohol,
 Avowedly to line *her* halls with flowers.
 This was my visitor's tale, and it was true:
 For thrice and oftener he hath roamed abroad,
 And left his Dorian oil-jar here with me:
 But—'tis a fortnight since I saw his face.
 Hath he then really something sweet elsewhere?
 Am I forgot? I'll charm him now with charms.
 But let him try me more, and by the Fates
 He'll soon be knocking at the gates of hell.
 Spells of such power are in this chest of mine,
 Learned, lady, from mine host in Palestine.

Mistress, farewell: turn ocean-ward thy steeds:
 As I have purposed, so shall I fulfil.
 Farewell, thou bright-faced Moon! Ye stars, farewell,
 That wait upon the car of noiseless Night.

IDYLL III.

The Serenade.

I PIPE to Amaryllis; while my goats,
Tityrus their guardian, browse along the fell.
O Tityrus, as I love thee, feed my goats:
And lead them to the spring, and, Tityrus, 'ware
The lifted crest of yon red Libyan ram.

Ah winsome Amaryllis! Why no more
Greet'st thou thy darling, from the caverned rock
Peeping all coyly? Think'st thou scorn of him?
Hath a near view revealed him lanthorn-jawed,
Splay-nostrilled? Lady, for thy sake he dies.
See here ten apples: from the tree thou lov'st
I plucked them: I shall bring ten more anon.
Ah witness my heart-anguish! Oh were I
A booming bee, to waft me to thy lair,
Threading the fern and ivy in whose depths
Thou nestlest! I have learned what Love is now:
Fell god, he drank the lioness's milk,
In the wild woods his mother cradled him,

Whose fire slow-burns me, smiting to the bone.
 O thou whose glance is beauty and whose heart
 All marble: O dark-eyebrowed maiden mine!
 Cling to thy herdsman, let him kiss thy lips,
 For there is sweetness in an idle kiss.

No? Thou wilt cause me rend to shreds the crown,
 The ivy-crown which, sweet, I guard for thee,
 Inwov'n with scented parsley and with flowers.

Oh! I am desperate—What betides me, what?—
 Still art thou deaf? I'll doff my coat of skins
 And plunge into yon waves, where on the watch—
 For thunnies sits old Olpis:—say I die:

My death at least will bring thee happiness.

That learn'd I, when (I asking 'Loves she me?')

The *Love-in-absence* cracked not in my grasp,
 But shrank to nothing on my fair young wrist.

I learn'd it of the sieve-divining crone

Who gleaned behind the reapers yesterday:

'Thou'rt wrapt up all,' Agraia said, 'in her;
 She makes of none account her worshipper.'

Lo! a white goat, and twins, I keep for thee:
 Oft Memnon's dark-skinned daughter sues for these:
 And she shall have them: thou but foollest me.

She's coming—by the quivering of my eye!
 I'll lean against the pine-tree here and sing.
 She may look round: she is not adamant.

[*Sings*] Hippomenes, when he a maid would wed,
Took apples in his hand, and on he sped.
She saw, she raved; Love's waves went o'er her head.

Why with his oxen did Melampus pace
From Othrys' top to Pylos? E'en to place
In Bias' arms a damsel passing rare;
Alphesibœa, queen of wits, she bare.

Did not Adonis rouse to such excess
Of frenzy her whose name is Loveliness,
(He a mere lad whose wethers grazed the hill)
That, dead, he's pillowed on her bosom still?

Endymion sleeps the sleep that changeth not:
And, maiden mine, I envy him his lot!
I envy Jason: his it was to gain
Bliss that I dare not breathe in ears profane.

My head aches. What reck'st thou? I sing no
more:
E'en where I fell I'll lie, until the wolves
Rend me—may that be honey in thy mouth!

IDYLL IV.

The Herdsmen.

BATTUS. CORYDON.

BATTUS.

WHO owns these cattle, Corydon? Philondas?
Prythee say.

CORYDON.

No, Ægon: and he gave them me to tend while he's
away.

BATTUS.

And milk them in the gloaming, when none is there
to see?

CORYDON.

The old man brings the calves to suck, and keeps an
eye on me.

BATTUS.

And whither then hath vanished the cattle's rightful
lord?

CORYDON.

Hast thou not heard? With Milo he started Elis-ward.

BATTUS.

What! was e'er yet the wrestler's oil so much as smelt
by him?

CORYDON.

Men say he rivals Heracles in lustiness of limb.

BATTUS.

I'm Polydeuces' match and more: my mother tells
me so.

CORYDON.

—Well off he set; some twenty ewes took with him,
and a hoe:

BATTUS.

This Milo will be teaching wolves themselves to raven
next.

CORYDON.

—And by these bellowings his kine proclaim how sore
they're vexed.

BATTUS.

Poor things! they've found their master a sorry knave
indeed.

CORYDON.

They're poor enough, I grant you: they have not heart
to feed.

BATTUS.

Look at this calf! there's nothing, but bare bones, left
of her.

Pray, does she browse on dewdrops, as doth the grass-
hopper?

CORYDON.

Heavens, no! For now she ranges with me Æsarus'
glades,
And handfuls fair I pluck her there of young and green
grass-blades;
Now bounds about Latymnus, that gathering-place
of shades.

BATTUS.

Then that red bull, what leanness! In faith I should
be glad
If, at their feast of Here, the Lamprian burghers had
Just such a one; for Lampra's own condition is as bad.

CORYDON.

Yet to the Salt Lake's edges I drive him, I can swear;
Up Physcus, up Neæthus' side—he lacks not victuals
there,
With dittany and endive and foxglove for his fare.

BATTUS.

Well, well! I pity Ægon. His cattle, go they must

To rack and ruin, all because vain-glory was his lust.
The pipe that erst he fashioned is doubtless scored with
rust?

CORYDON.

Nay, by the Nymphs! He left it to me the self-same
day

He made for Pisa: I am too a minstrel in my way:
I'll strike you up a Glaucic, ay or a Pyrrhic lay.

I sing '*Hurrah for Croton*' and '*Zacynthus O 'tis fair,*'
And '*Eastward to Lacinium.*'—the 'bruiser Milo there

His single self ate eighty loaves; there also did he pull
Down from its mountain-dwelling, by one hoof grasped,

a bull,

And gave it Amaryllis: and thereupon a shout

Rose from the girls; the goatherd, he only laughed
right out.

BATTUS.

Ah fairy Amaryllis! though dead, forgotten ne'er!

The love wherewith I love my goats to her who's gone
I bare.

Oh for the all-unkindly fate that's fallen to my share!

CORYDON.

Cheer up, sweet lad! tomorrow may set thee right
again.

Aye for the living are there hopes, past hoping are the
slain.

And now Zeus sends us sunshine, and now he sends
us rain.

BATTUS.

I'm better. Beat those young ones off! E'en now
their teeth attack

That olive's shoots, the froward brutes! Back, with
your white face, back!

CORYDON.

Back to thy hill, Cymætha! Great Pan, how deaf
thou art!

I shall be with thee presently, and in the end thou'lt
smart.

I warn thee, keep thy distance. Look, up she creeps
again!

Oh if I had my cudgel, I'd lay about her then!

BATTUS.

For heaven's sake, Corydon, look here! Just now
a bramble-spike

Ran, there, into my instep—and oh how deep they
strike,

Those lancewood-shafts! A murrain light on that calf,
I say!

I got it gaping after her. Canst thou discern it pray?

CORYDON.

Ay, ay; and here I have it, between my finger-nails.

BATTUS.

Eh! at how slight a matter how tall a warrior quails!

CORYDON.

Ne'er range the hill-crest, Battus, all sandal-less and bare:

Because the thistle and the thorn lift aye their plum'd heads there.

BATTUS.

—Well, Corydon, does that old man we wot of (tell me please!)

Still haunt the dark-browed little girl whom once he used to tease?

CORYDON.

Ay, innocence, thou hast hit it: I saw them yesterday
Down by the byre; and, trust me, loving enough were they.

BATTUS.

Well done, my ancient squire of dames! I scarce can call him man:

A Satyr might be near the mark, or an uncouth-limbed Pan.

IDYLL V.

The Battle of the Bards.

COMETES. LACON. MORSON.

COMETES.

GOATS, from a certain shepherd, of Sybaris, keep
away :

His name is Lacon ; and he stole my goatskin yesterday.

LACON.

Hi ! lambs ! avoid yon fountain. Have ye not eyes to see
Cometes, him who filched a pipe but two days back
from me ?

COMETES.

Sybartes' villain own a pipe ? whence got'st thou that,
and how ?

Tootling through straws with Corydon mayhap's be-
neath thee now ?

LACON.

'Twas Lycon's gift, your highness. But pray, Cometes,
say,

What is that skin wherewith thou saidst that Lacon
walked away?

Why, thy lord's self had ne'er a skin whereon his
limbs to lay.

COMETES.

The skin that Crocylus gave me, a dark one streaked
with white,

The day he slew his she-goat. Why, thou wert ill
with spite,

Then, my false friend; and thou would'st end by
beggaring me quite.

LACON.

Did Lacon, did Calæthis' son purloin a goatskin? No,
By Pan that haunts the sea-beach! Lad, if I served
thee so,

Crazed may I drop from yon hill-top to Crathis' stream
below!

COMETES.

Nor pipe of thine, good fellow—the Ladies of the Lake
So be still kind and good to me—did e'er Cometes take.

LACON.

Be Daphnis' woes my portion, should that my credence
win!

Still, if thou list to stake a kid—that surely were no sin—
Come on, I'll sing against thee—until thou givest in.

COMETES.

'The hog he braved Athene.' As for the kid, 'tis there :
You stake a lamb against him—that fat one—if you dare.

LACON.

Fox! were that fair for either? At shearing who'd
prefer
Horsehair to wool? or when the goat stood handy,
suffer her
To nurse her firstling, and himself go milk a blatant cur?

COMETES.

The same who deemed his hornet's-buzz the true cicala's
note,
And braved—like you—his better. And so forsooth
you vote
My kid a trifle? Then come on, fellow! I stake the
goat.

LACON.

Why be so hot? Art thou on fire? First prythee
take thy seat
'Neath this wild woodland olive: thy tones will sound
more sweet.
Here falls a cold rill drop by drop, and green grass-
blades uprear

Their heads, and fallen leaves are thick, and locusts
prattle here.

COMETES.

Hot I am not ; but hurt I am, and sorely, when I think
That thou canst look me in the face and never bleach
nor blink—

Me, thine own boyhood's tutor ! Go, train the she-wolf's
brood :

Train dogs—that they may rend thee ! This, this is
gratitude !

LACON.

When learned I from thy practice or preaching aught
that's right,

Thou puppet, thou misshapen lump of ugliness and spite ?

COMETES.

When ? When I beat thee, wailing sore : yon goats
looked on with glee,

And bleated ; and were dealt with e'en as I had dealt
with thee.

LACON.

Well, hunchback, shallow be thy grave as was thy
judgment then !

But hither, hither ! Thou'lt not dip in herdsman's lore
again.

COMETES.

Nay, here are oaks and galingale : the hum of housing bees
 Makes the place pleasant, and the birds are piping in
 the trees.

And here are two cold streamlets ; here deeper shadows
 fall

Than yon place owns, and look what cones drop from
 the pinetree tall.

LACON.

Come here, and tread on lambswool that is soft as
 any dream :

Still more unsavoury than thyself to me thy goatskins
 seem.

Here will I plant a bowl of milk, our ladies' grace to
 win ;

And one, as huge, beside it, sweet olive-oil therein.

COMETES.

Come here, and trample dainty fern and poppyblossom :
 sleep

On goatskins that are softer than thy fleeces piled three
 deep.

Here will I plant eight milkpails, great Pan's regard
 to gain,

Round them eight cups : full honeycombs shall every
 cup contain.

LACON.

Well! there essay thy woodcraft: thence fight me,
never budge

From thine own oak; e'en have thy way. But who
shall be our judge?

Oh, if Lycopas with his kine should chance this way
to trudge!

COMETES.

Nay, I want no Lycopas. But hail yon woodsman, do:
'Tis Morson—see! his arms are full of bracken—
there, by you.

LACON.

We'll hail him.

COMETES.

Ay, you hail him.

LACON.

Friend, 'twill not take thee long:
We're striving which is master, we twain, in woodland
song:

And thou, my good friend Morson, ne'er look with
favouring eyes

On me; nor yet to yonder lad be fain to judge the
prize.

COMETES.

Nay, by the Nymphs, sweet Morson, ne'er for Cometes'
sake

Stretch thou a point; nor e'er let *him* undue advantage
take.

Sybartes owns yon wethers; a Thurian is he:
And here, my friend, Eumares' goats, of Sybaris, you
may see.

LACON.

And who asked thee, thou knave of knaves, to whom
belonged these flocks,
Sybartes, or (it might be) me? Eh, thou'rt a chatter-
box!

COMETES.

The simple truth, most worshipful, is all that I allege:
I'm not for boasting. But thy wit hath all too keen
an edge.

LACON.

Come sing, if singing's in thee—and may our friend get
back
To town alive! Heaven help us, lad, how thy tongue
doth clack!

COMETES. [*Sings*]

Not Daphnis, not the minstrel's self, was precious to the
Nine

As I. I offered yesterday two kids upon their shrine.

LACON.

Ay, but Apollo fancies me hugely: for him I rear
A lordly ram: and, look you, the Carnival is near.

COMETES.

Twin kids hath every goat I milk, save two. My maid,
my own,
Eyes me and asks 'At milking time, rogue, art thou all
alone?'

LACON.

Ay, ay! nigh twenty baskets doth Lacon fill with
cheese:
Hath time to woo a sweetheart too upon the blossomed
leas.

COMETES.

Clarissa pelts her goatherd with apples, should he stray
By with his goats; and pouts her lip in a quaint
charming way.

LACON.

I, on the sly, meet Cratidas: none sees me but my
flocks:
How maddeningly o'er that smooth neck ripple those
shining locks!

COMETES.

But briar and anemone, can they compare at all
 With the musk-rose whose clusters rise o'er the garden
 wall?

LACON.

Nor acorns with hill-apples. The children of the holm
 Have shapely cups; but apples taste as the honeycomb.

COMETES.

A cushat I will presently procure and give to her
 Who loves me: I know where it sits; up in the juniper.

LACON.

Nay! a soft fleece, to make a coat, I'll give the day
 I shear
 My brindled ewe—(no hand but mine shall touch it)—
 to my dear.

COMETES.

Back, lambs, from that wild-olive: and be content to
 browse
 Here on the shoulder of the hill, beneath the myrtle
 boughs.

LACON.

Run, (will ye?) Ball and Dogstar, down from the oak
 tree, run:

And feed where Spot is feeding, and catch the morning
sun.

COMETES.

I have a bowl of cypress-wood: I have besides a cup:
Praxiteles designed them: for *her* they're treasured up.

LACON.

I have a dog who throttles wolves: he loves the sheep,
and they
Love him: I'll give him to my dear, to keep wild
beasts at bay.

COMETES.

Ye locusts that o'erleap my fence, oh let my vines
escape
Your clutches, I beseech you: the bloom is on the grape.

LACON.

Ye crickets, mark how nettled our friend the goatherd is!
I ween, ye cost the reapers pangs as acute as his.

COMETES.

Those foxes with their bushy tails, I hate to see them
crawl
Round Micon's homestead and purloin his grapes at
evenfall.

LACON.

I hate to see the beetles come warping on the wind,
 And climb Philondas' trees, and leave never a fig
 behind.

COMETES.

Have you forgot that drubbing you got? At every
 stroke
 You grinned and wriggled with a grace, and clung to
 yonder oak.

LACON.

That I've forgot—but I have not, how once Eumares
 tied
 You to that selfsame oak-trunk, and dressed your
 filthy hide.

COMETES.

There's some one ill—of heartburn. You note it, I
 presume,
 Morson? Go quick, and fetch a squill from some old
 beldam's tomb.

LACON.

I think I'm stinging somebody, as Morson too perceives—
 Go to the river and dig up a clump of sowbread-leaves.

COMETES.

May Himera flow, not water, but milk: and may'st
thou blush,
Crathis, with wine; and fruitage grow upon every rush.

LACON.

For me may Sybaris flow, not milk, but honey: so that
you,
My maid, may dip your pitcher each morn in honey-dew.

COMETES.

My goats, they feed on clover and goats-delight; they
tread
On mastick leaves, and fling their limbs down on a
strawberry bed.

LACON.

My sheep have honeysuckle bloom for pasture: ivy
grows
In multitudes around them, and blossoms like the rose.

COMETES.

I scorn Alcippe. When she took my cushat, she did not
Draw with both hands my face to hers, and kiss me on
the spot.

LACON.

I like Eumedes hugely: for, when I put a flute
 Into his hand, he kissed me, and heartily to boot.

COMETES.

Lacon, the nightingale should scarce be challenged by
 the jay,
 Nor swans by hoopoes: but, poor boy, thou aye wert
 for a fray.

MORSON.

I bid the shepherd hold his peace. To thee, Cometes, I,
 I, Morson, judge this lamb: the Nymphs will claim her
 by-and-bye;
 Then shalt thou send to Morson an elegant lambs-fry.

COMETES.

By Pan, but I will send it! My bucks, run riot now:
 I mean to crow o'er Lacon, ay ye shall soon see
 how!
 I've won, and I could leap sky-high! And be ye
 of good cheer,
 My hornèd ewes: I'll wash you all tomorrow in the
 mere.
 Ho! you, sir, with the glossy coat and dangerous crest;
 you dare

Look at a ewe, till I have slain my lamb—and ill you'll
fare!

What! is he at his tricks again? He is, and he will
get

Or my name's not Cometes a proper pounding yet.

IDYLL VI.

The Drawn Battle.

DAPHNIS. DAMÆTAS.

DAMÆTAS once, and Daphnis with his kine,
Met in a glen: one beard was partly grown,
And one just glinting. There they sat and sang
All by a brookside on a summer's noon:
And thou shalt hear the burden of their song;
Daphnis began it, as the challenger.

DAPHNIS.

“ See! Galatea pelts thy flock with fruit,
And calls their master ‘Lack-love,’ Polypheme:
Thou sittest all regardless, heeding nought
(Blind, blind!) but thy sweet piping. Look again,
She hits the dog that follows at thy heels,
The fleeced flock’s sentinel: oceanward he looks
And barks, and, imaged in the light surf, runs
Amid the breakers plashing lazily.
See that he leap not on her as she comes

From her sea-bath, and rend her dainty limbs!
—She fools thee like the sultry thistledown
In hot sweet summer; forward when thou'rt cold,
Coy when thou'rt forward: plays a dangerous game;
But, Polypheme, all tricks are fair in love."

And then Damcetas lilted pleasantly:—
"I marked her pelt my flock, I was not blind,
By Pan, by this my one my precious eye
That bounds my vision now and evermore!
But Telemus the seer, be his the woe,
His and his children's, that he promised me!
Yet do I too tease her; I pass her by,
Pretend to woo another:—and she hears
(Heaven help me!) and is faint with jealousy;
And hurrying from her sea-bath, as if stung,
Scans eagerly my grotto and my flock.
'Twas I that taught my dog to bark at her:
For, when I wooed her, he would whine and lay
His o'er-obtrusive muzzle in her lap.
These things she'll maybe note, and send me soon
Message on message: but I'll bar my door
Until she swear to wed me on this isle!
And I am less unlovely than men say.
I looked into the mere (the mere was calm),
And goodly seemed my beard, and goodly seemed

My solitary eye, and, half-revealed,
My teeth gleamed whiter than the Parian marl.
Thrice for good luck I spat upon my robe:
That learned I of the hag Cottytaris—her
Who fluted lately with Hippocoon's mowers."

Damoetas then kissed Daphnis lovingly:
One gave a pipe and one a goodly flute.
Straight to the shepherd's flute and herdsman's pipe
The younglings bounded in the soft green grass:
And neither was o'ermatched, but matchless both.

IDYLL VII.

Harvest-Home.

ONCE on a time did Eucritus and I
(With us Amyntas) to the riverside
Steal from the city. For Lycopas' sons
Were that day busy with the harvest-home,
Antigenes and Phrasidemus, sprung
(If aught thou holdest by the good old names)
By Clytia from great Chalcon—him who erst
Planted one stalwart knee against the rock,
And lo, beneath his foot Byrrhina's rill
Brake forth, and at its side poplar and elm
Shewed aisles of pleasant shadow, greenly roofed
By tufted leaves. Scarce midway were we now,
Nor yet descried the tomb of Brasidas:
When there drew near a wayfarer from Crete,
A favourite of the Muse, young Lycidas.
The horned herd was his care: a glance might tell
So much: for every inch a herdsman he.
Slung o'er his shoulder was a ruddy hide

Torn from a he-goat, shaggy, tangle-haired,
That reeked of rennet yet: a broad belt clasped
A patched cloak round his breast, and for a staff
His right hand bore a gnarled wild-olive bough.
Soon with a quiet smile he spoke—his eye
Twinkled, and laughter sat upon his lip:
“And whither ploddest thou thy weary way
Beneath the noontide sun, Simichides?
For now the lizard sleeps upon the wall,
The crested lark folds now his wandering wing.
Speed'st thou, a bidd'n guest, to some reveller's board?
Or townward to the treading of the grape?
For lo! recoiling from thy hurrying feet
The pavement-stones ring out right merrily.”
Then I: “Friend Lycid, all men say that none
Of haymakers or herdsmen is thy match
At piping: and my soul is glad thereat.
Yet, to speak truth, I think to rival thee.
Now look, this road holds holiday to-day:
For banded brethren solemnise a feast
To richly-dight Demeter, thanking her
For her good gifts: for with no grudging hand
Hath the boon goddess filled the wheaten floors.
So come: the way, the day, is thine as mine:
Try we our woodcraft—each may learn from each.
I am, as thou, a trumpet-voice of song;

All hail me chief of minstrels. But I'm not,
 Heaven knows, o'ercredulous: no, I scarce can yet
 (I think) outvie Philetas, nor the bard
 Of Samos, champion of Sicilian song.
 They are as cicadas challenged by a frog."

I spake to gain my ends; and laughing light
 He said: "Accept this club, as thou'rt indeed
 A born truth-teller, shaped by heav'n's own hand!
 I hate your builders who would rear a house
 High as Oromedon's mountain-pinnacle:
 I hate your song-birds too, whose cuckoo-cry
 Struggles (in vain) to match the Chian bard.
 But come, we'll sing forthwith, Simichides, 50
 Our woodland music: and for my part I—
 List, comrade, if you like the simple air
 I forged among the uplands yesterday.

—[Sings] Safe be my true-love convoyed o'er the main
 To Mitylene—though the southern blast
 Chase the lithe waves, while westward slant the kids,
 Or low above the verge Orion stand—
 If from Love's furnace she will rescue me,
 For Lycidas is parched with hot desire.
 Let halcyons lay the seawaves and the winds,
 Northwind and Westwind, that in shores far-off

Flutters the seaweed—halcyons, of all birds
Whose prey is on the waters, held most dear
By the green Nereids: yea let all things smile
On her to Mitylene voyaging,
And in fair harbour may she ride at last.
I on that day, a chaplet wov'n of dill
Or rose or simple violet on my brow,
Will draw the wine of Pteleas from the cask
Stretched by the ingle. They shall roast me beans,
And elbow-deep in thyme and asphodel
And quaintly-curling parsley shall be piled
My bed of rushes, where in royal ease
I sit and, thinking of my darling, drain
With stedfast lip the liquor to the dregs.
I'll have a pair of pipers, shepherds both,
This from Acharnæ, from Lycopis that;
And Tityrus shall be near me and shall sing
How the swain Daphnis loved the stranger-maid,
And how he ranged the fells, and how the oaks
(Such oaks as Himera's banks are green withal)
Sang dirges o'er him waning fast away
Like snow on Athos, or on Hæmus high,
Or Rhodope, or utmost Caucasus.
And he shall sing me how the big chest held
(All through the maniac malice of his lord)
A living goatherd: how the round-faced bees,

Lured from their meadow by the cedar smell,
Fed him with daintiest flowers, because the Muse
Had made his lips a haunt of honeyed song.
Happy Cometes, this sweet lot was thine!
The chest thy lodging and the honeycomb
Thy meat, thou didst fulfil the natural year.
And oh hadst thou been numbered with the quick
In my day! I had led thy pretty goats
About the hill-side, listening to thy voice:
While thou hadst lain thee down 'neath oak or pine,
Divine Cometes, warbling pleasantly."

He spake and paused; and thereupon spake I.
"I too, friend Lycid, as I ranged the fells,
Have learned much lore and pleasant from the Nymphs,
Whose fame mayhap hath reached the throne of Zeus.
But this wherewith I'll grace thee ranks the first:
Thou listen, since the Muses like thee well.

[Sings] On me the young Loves sneezed: for hapless I
Am fain of Myrto as the goats of Spring.
But my best friend Aratus inly pines
For one who loves him not. Aristes sees—
(A wondrous seer is he, whose lute and lay
Shrinèd Apollo's self would scarce disdain)—
How love hath scorched Aratus to the bone.

O Pan, that hauntest Homole's fair champaign,
Bring the soft charmer, whosoe'er it be,
Unbid to his sweet arms—so, gracious Pan,
May ne'er thy ribs and shoulderblades be lashed
With squills by young Arcadians, whensoe'er
They lack their supper! But should this my prayer
Mislike thee, then on nettles mayest thou sleep,
Dinted and sore all over from their claws!
Then mayest thou lodge amid Edonian hills
By Hebrus, in midwinter; there subsist,
The Bear thy neighbour: and in summer range
With the far Æthiops 'neath the Blemmyan rocks
Where Nile is no more seen! But O ye Loves,
Whose cheeks are like pink apples, quit your homes
By Hyetis, or Byblis' pleasant rill,
Or fair Dione's rocky pedestal,
And strike that fair one with your arrows, strike
The ill-starred damsel who disdains my friend.
And lo, what is she but an o'er-ripe pear?
The girls all cry 'Her bloom is on the wane.'
We'll watch, Aratus, at that porch no more,
Nor waste shoe-leather: let the morning cock
Crow to wake others up to numb despair!
Let Molon, and none else, that ordeal brave:
While we make ease our study, and secure
Some witch, to charm all evil from our door."

I ceased. He, smiling sweetly as before,
Gave me the staff, 'the Muses' parting gift,'
And leftward sloped tow'rds Pyxa. We the while,
Bent us to Phrasydeme's, Eucritus and I,
And least, not last, Amyntas: there we lay
Half-buried in a couch of fragrant reed
And fresh-cut vineleaves, who so glad as we?
A wealth of elm and poplar shook o'erhead;
Hard by, a sacred spring flowed gurgling on
From the Nymphs' grot, and in the sombre boughs
The sweet cicada chirped laboriously.
Hid in the thick thorn-bushes far away
The treefrog's note was heard; the crested lark
Sang with the goldfinch; turtles made their moan,
And o'er the fountain hung the gilded bee.
All of rich summer smelt, of autumn all:
Pears at our feet, and apples at our side
Tumbled luxuriant; branches on the ground
Sprawled, overweighed with damsons; while we brushed
From the cask's head the crust of four long years.
Say, ye who dwell upon Parnassian peaks,
Nymphs of Castalia, did old Chiron e'er
Set before Heracles a cup so brave
In Pholus' cavern—did as nectarous draughts
Cause that Anapian shepherd, in whose hand
Rocks were as pebbles, Polypheme the strong,

Featly to foot it o'er the cottage lawns:—
As, ladies, ye bid flow that day for us
All by Demeter's shrine at harvest-home?
Beside whose cornstacks may I oft again
Plant my broad fan: while she stands by and smiles,
Poppies and cornsheaves on each laden arm.

4

IDYLL VIII.

The Triumph of Daphnis.

DAPHNIS. MENALCAS. A GOATHERD.

DAPHNIS, the gentle herdsman, met once, as rumour
tells,

Menalcas making with his flock the circle of the fells.
Both chins were gilt with coming beards: both lads
could sing and play:

Menalcas glanced at Daphnis, and thus was heard to
say:

“Art thou for singing, Daphnis, lord of the lowing
kine?

I say my songs are better, by what thou wilt, than
thine.”

Then in his turn spake Daphnis, and thus he made
reply:

“O shepherd of the fleecy flock, thou pipest clear and
high;

But come what will, Menalcas, thou ne'er wilt sing
as I.”

MENALCAS.

This art thou fain to ascertain, and risk a bet with me?

DAPHNIS.

This I full fain would ascertain, and risk a bet with thee.

MENALCAS.

But what, for champions such as we, would seem a fitting prize?

DAPHNIS.

I stake a calf: stake thou a lamb, its mother's self in size.

MENALCAS.

A lamb I'll venture never: for aye at close of day
Father and mother count the flock, and passing strict
are they.

DAPHNIS.

Then what shall be the victor's fee? What wager wilt
thou lay?

MENALCAS.

A pipe discoursing through nine mouths I made, full
fair to view;
The wax is white thereon, the line of this and that edge
true.
I'll risk it: risk my father's own is more than I dare
do.

DAPHNIS.

A pipe discoursing through nine mouths, and fair, hath
Daphnis too :

The wax is white thereon, the line of this and that edge
true.

But yesterday I made it: this finger feels the pain
Still, where indeed the rifted reed hath cut it clean in
twain.

But who shall be our umpire? who listen to our strain?

MENALCAS.

Suppose we hail yon goatherd; him at whose horned
herd now

The dog is barking—yonder dog with white upon his
brow.

Then out they called: the goatherd marked them,
and up came he;

Then out they sang; the goatherd their umpire fain
would be.

To shrill Menalcas' lot it fell to start the woodland lay:
Then Daphnis took it up. And thus Menalcas led the
way.

MENALCAS.

“Ye god-created vales and streams! Oh if Menalcas e'er
Piped aught of pleasant music in your ears:

Then pasture, nothing loth, his lambs; and let young
 Daphnis fare
 No worse, should he stray hither with his steers."

DAPHNIS.

"Ye joy-abounding lawns and springs! If Daphnis
 sang you e'er
 Such songs as ne'er from nightingale have flowed;
 Lend to his herd your fatness; and let Menalcas share
 Like plenty, should he wend along this road."

MENALCAS.

"'Tis springtide all and greenness, and all the udders
 teem
 With milk, and all things young have life anew,
 Where my sweet maiden wanders: but parched and
 withered seem,
 When she departeth, lawn and shepherd too."

DAPHNIS.

"There sheep and goats twin-burdened abound, and
 honey-bees
 Peopling the hives, and oaks of statelier growth,
 Where falls my darling's footstep: but hungriness shall
 seize,
 When she departeth, herd and herdsman both."

MENALCAS.

“O ram, the fair flock’s chieftain; thy blunt-nebb’d
favourites guide

Where round the mere lie forests myriad-deep:

’Tis there she hides! Go, Stump-horn, tell her how
Proteus plied

(A god) the shepherd’s trade, with seals for sheep.”

DAPHNIS.

“I ask not gold, I ask not the broad lands of a king;

I ask not to be fleeter than the breeze;

But ’neath this steep to watch my sheep, feeding as
one, and fling

(Still clasping *her*) my carol o’er the seas.”

MENALCAS.

“Storms are the fruit-tree’s bane; the brook’s, a summer
hot and dry;

The stag’s a woven net, a gin the dove’s;

Mankind’s, a soft sweet maiden. Others have pined ere I:

Zeus! Father! hast not thou thy ladyloves?”

Thus far, in alternating strains, the lads their woes
rehears:

Then each one gave a closing stave. Thus sang
Menalcas first:—

MENALCAS.

“O spare, good wolf, my weanlings! their milky mothers
spare!

Harm not the little lad who hath so many in his care!
What, Firefly, is thy sleep so deep? It ill befits a
hound,

When ranging with his master, to slumber over-sound.
And, wethers, of this tender grass take, nothing coy,
your fill:

So, when the after-math shall come, will none be weak
or ill.

So! so! feed on, that ye be full, that not an udder fail:
Part of the milk shall rear the lambs, and part shall
fill my pail.”

Then Daphnis flung a carol out, as of a nightingale:—

DAPHNIS.

“Me from her grot but yesterday a girl of haughty
brow

Spied as I passed her with my kine, and said, ‘How
fair art thou!’

I gave for answer not so much as one disdainful word,
But, looking ever on the ground, paced onwards with
my herd.

For sweet the heifer’s music, and sweet the heifer’s
breath;

Sweet things to me the youngling calf, sweet things her
mother saith ;
And sweet is sleep by summer-brooks upon the breezy
lea :
And acorns they grace well the oak, apples the apple-
tree,
Her calves the cow ; the herdsman, but for his herd
cares he.”
So sang the lads ; and thereupon outspake the referee :

GOATHERD.

“O Daphnis, lovely is thy voice, thy music sweetly
sung ;
Such song is pleasanter to me than honey on my tongue.
Accept this pipe, for thou hast won. And, should there
be some notes
That thou could'st teach *me*, as I plod alongside with
my goats ;
I'll give thee for thy schooling this ewe, that horns hath
none :
Day after day she'll fill the can, until the milk o'errun.”

Then how the one lad laughed and leaped and
clapped his hands for glee !
A kid that bounds to meet its dam might dance as
merrily.

And how the other inly burned, struck down by his
disgrace!

A maid first parting from her home might wear as sad
a face.

Thenceforth was Daphnis champion of all the country
side:

And won, while yet in topmost youth, a Naiad for his
bride.

IDYLL IX.

Pastorals.

DAPHNIS. MENALCAS. A SHEPHERD.

SHEPHERD.

A SONG from Daphnis! Open he the lay,
He open: and Menalcas follow next:
While the calves suck, and with the barren kine
The young bulls graze, or roam knee-deep in leaves,
And ne'er play truant. But a song from thee,
Daphnis—anon Menalcas will reply.

DAPHNIS.

Sweet is the chorus of the calves and kine,
And sweet the herdsman's piping. I outvie
Their sweetness; and a rush-strewn bed is mine
Near a cool rill, where carpeted I lie
On fair white goatskins. From a hill-top high
The westwind swept me down the herd entire,
Cropping the strawberries: whence it comes that I

No more heed summer, with his breath of fire,
Than lovers heed the words of mother and of sire.

Thus Daphnis: and Menalcas answered thus:—

MENALCAS.

O Ætna, mother mine! A grotto fair,
Scooped in the rocks, have I: and there I keep
All that in dreams men picture! Treasured there
Are multitudes of she-goats and of sheep,
Swathed in whose wool from top to toe I sleep.
The fire that boils my pot, with oak or beech
Is piled—dry beech-logs when the snow lies deep;
And storm and sunshine, I disdain them each
As toothless sires a nut, when broth is in their reach.

I clapped applause, and straight produced my gifts:
A staff for Daphnis—'twas the handiwork
Of nature, in my father's acres grown:
Yet might a turner find no fault therewith.
I gave his mate a goodly spiral-shell:
We stalked its owner on th' Icarian rocks
And ate him, fairly parted among five.
He made forthwith a trumpet of his shell.
Tell, woodland Muse—and then farewell—what song
I, the chance-comer, sang before those twain.

SHEPHERD.

Ne'er shall a falsehood scarify my tongue!

Crickets with crickets, ants with ants agree,
And hawks with hawks: and music sweetly sung,
Beyond all else, is grateful unto me.

Filled aye with music may my dwelling be!
Not slumber, not the bursting forth of Spring

So charms me, nor the flowers that tempt the bee,
As those sweet Sisters. He, on whom they fling
One gracious glance, is proof to Circe's blandishing.

IDYLL X.

The Two Workmen.

MILO. BATTUS.

MILO.

WELL, my poor ploughman, and what ails thee now?
Thy furrow lies not even as of yore:
Thy fellows leave behind thy lagging plough,
As the flock leaves a ewe whose feet are sore:
By noon and midday what will be thy plight
If now, so soon, thy coulter fails to bite?

BATTUS.

Hewn from hard rocks, untired at set of sun,
Milo, didst ne'er regret some absent one?

MILO.

Not I. What time have workers for regret?

BATTUS.

Hath love ne'er kept thee from thy slumbers yet?

MILO.

Nay, heaven forbid! If once the cat taste cream!

BATTUS.

Milo, these ten days love hath been my dream.

MILO.

You drain your wine, while vinegar's scarce with me.

BATTUS.

—Hence since last spring untrimmed my borders be.

MILO.

And what lass flouts thee?

BATTUS.

She whom we heard play
Amongst Hippocoon's reapers yesterday.

MILO.

Your sins have found you out—you're e'en served right:
You'll clasp a corn-crake in your arms all night.

BATTUS.

You laugh: but headstrong Love is blind no less
Than Plutus: talking big is foolishness.

MILO.

I don't talk big. But lay the corn-ears low

And sing the while some love-song—easier so
Will seem your toil: you used to sing, I know.

BATTUS.

Maids of Pieria, of my slim lass sing!
One touch of yours ennobles everything.

[*Sings.*]

My sweet! on thy complexion men remark;
Call thee shrunk, swart: I call thee olive-brown.
Violets and pencilled hyacinths are dark,
Yet first of flowers they're chosen for a crown.
As goats pursue the clover, wolves the goat,
And cranes the ploughman, upon thee I dote.

Had I but Cræsus' wealth, we twain should stand,
Gold-sculptured, in Love's temple: thou should'st
play

Thy pipe, a rose or apple in thy hand,
I flaunt my minstrel's robe and sandals gay.
Bombyca! twinkling ebony are thy feet,
Honey thy mouth, thy ways none knows how sweet!

MILO.

Fine verses can this unknown herdsman make—
How shone the artist in each measured line!
Why, lad, that beard grew on thee by mistake!
List to this stave, by Lytierse the divine.

[*Sings*] O rich in fruit and cornblade: be this field
Tilled well, Demeter, and fair fruitage yield!

Bind the sheaves, reapers: lest one, passing, say—
'A fig for these, they're never worth their pay.'

Let the mown swathes look northward, ye who mow,
Or westward—for the ears grow fattest so.

Avoid a noontide nap, ye threshing men:
The chaff flies thickest from the corn-ears then.

Wake when the lark wakes; when he slumbers, close
Your work, ye reapers: and at noontide doze.

Boys, the frogs' life for me! They need not him
Who fills the flagon, for in drink they swim.

Better boil herbs, thou toiler after gain,
Than, splitting cummin, split thy hand in twain.

This that I've sung thee, ploughman, is a tune
For men to sing that swelter in the sun.

Thy meagre love-tale is a thing to croon

In thy mamma's ear when her dreams are done.

IDYLL XI.

The Giant's Wooing.

METHINKS all nature hath no cure for Love,
Plaster or unguent, Nicias, saving one;
And this is light and pleasant to a man,
Yet hard withal to compass—minstrelsy.
As well thou wottest, who'rt thyself a leech,
And a prime favourite of those Sisters nine.
'Twas thus our Giant lived a life of ease,
Old Polyphemus, when, the down scarce seen
On lip and chin, he wooed his ocean nymph:
No curlypated rose-and-apple wooer,
But a fell madman, blind to all but love.
Oft from the green grass foldward fared his sheep
Unbid: while he upon the windy beach,
Singing his Galatea, sat and pined
From dawn to dusk, an ulcer at his heart:
Great Aphrodite's shaft had fixed it there.
Yet found he that one cure: he sate him down
On the tall cliff, and seaward looked, and sang:—

“White Galatea, why disdain thy love?
White as a press'd cheese, delicate as the lamb,
Wild as the heifer, soft as summer grapes!
If sweet sleep chain me, here thou walk'st at large;
If sweet sleep loose me, straightway thou art gone,
Scared like a sheep that sees the gray wolf near.
I loved thee, maiden, when thou cam'st long since,
To pluck the hyacinth-blossom on the fell,
Thou and my mother, piloted by me.
I saw, I see thee still, from that day forth
For ever; but 'tis nought, ay nought, to thee.
I know, sweet maiden, why thou art so coy:
Shaggy and huge, a single eyebrow spans
From ear to ear my forehead, whence one eye
Gleams, and an o'erbroad nostril tops my lip.
Yet I, this monster, feed a thousand sheep
That yield me sweetest draughts at milking-tide:
In summer, autumn, or midwinter, still
Fails not my cheese; my milkpail aye o'erflows.
Then I can pipe as ne'er did Giant yet,
Singing our loves—ours, honey, thine and mine—
At dead of night: I rear eleven hinds
(Each with her fawn) and bearcubs four, for thee.
Oh come to me—thou shalt not rue the day—
And let the mad seas beat against the shore!
'Twere sweet to haunt my cave the livelong night:

Laurel, and cypress tall, and ivy dun,
And vines of sumptuous fruitage, all are there :
And a cold spring that pine-clad Ætna flings
Down from the white snow's midst, a draught for gods !
Who would not change for this the ocean-waves ?

“But thou mislik'st my hair? Well, oaken logs
Are here, and embers yet aglow with fire.
Burn (if thou wilt) my heart out, and my eye,
My lonely eye wherein is my delight.
Oh why was I not born a finny thing,
To float unto thy side and kiss thy hand,
Denied thy lips—and bring thee lilies white
And crimson-petalled poppies' dainty bloom !
Stay—summer hath his flowers and autumn his ;
I could not bring all these the selfsame day.
Lo, should some mariner hither oar his road,
Sweet, he shall teach me straightway how to swim,
That haply I may learn what bliss ye find
In your sea-homes. O Galatea, come
Forth from you waves, and coming forth forget
(As I do, sitting here) to get thee home :
And feed my flocks and milk them, nothing loth,
And pour the rennet in to fix my cheese !

“The blame's my mother's ; she is false to me ;

Spake thee ne'er yet one sweet word for my sake,
Though day by day she sees me pine and pine.
I'll feign strange throbbings in my head and feet
To anguish her—as I am anguished now."

O Cyclops, Cyclops, where are flown thy wits?
Go plait rush-baskets, lop the olive-boughs
To feed thy lambkins—that were rational.
Chase not the recreant, milk the willing ewe:
The world hath Galateas fairer yet.

"—Many a fair damsel bids me sport with her
The livelong night, and smiles if I give ear.
On land at least I still am somebody."

Thus did the Giant feed his love on song,
And gained more ease than may be bought with gold.

IDYLL XII.

The Sweethearts.

THOU art come, love, come! Scarce thrice hath
dusk to day
Given place—but lovers in an hour grow gray.
As spring's more sweet than winter, grapes than thorns,
The ewe's fleece richer than her latest-born's;
As young girl's charms the thrice-wed wife's outshine,
As fawns are lither than the ungainly kine,
Or as the nightingale's shrill notes outvie
The mingled music of all birds that fly;
So at thy coming passing glad was I. '
I ran to greet thee e'en as pilgrims run
To beechen shadows from the scorching sun:
Oh if on us accordant Loves would breathe,
And our two names to future years bequeath!

'These twain'—let men say—'lived in olden days.
This was a *yokel* (in their country-phrase)

His *sweetheart* that, (so talked these simple folk,)
And lovingly they bore a mutual yoke.
The hearts of men were made of sterling gold,
When love bred love, in those brave days of old.'

O Zeus, O gods who age not nor decay!
Let e'en two hundred ages roll away,
But at the last these tidings let me learn,
Borne o'er the fatal pool whence none return:—
"By every tongue thy constancy is sung,
Thine and thy sweetheart's—chiefly by the young."
But lo, the future is in heaven's high hand:
Meanwhile thy graces all my praise demand,
Not false lip-praise, not idly bubbling froth—
For though thy wrath be kindled, e'en thy wrath
Hath no sting in it: doubly I'm caressed,
And go my way repaid with interest.

Oarsmen of Megara, ruled by Nisus erst!
Yours be all bliss, because ye honoured first
That true sweetheart, Athenian Diocles.
Around his gravestone with the first spring-breeze
Flock the girls all, to win the kissing-prize:
And whoso sweetliest lip to lip applies
Goes crown-clad home to her mother. Blest is he
Who in such strife is named the referee:

To brightfaced Ganymede full oft he'll cry,
To lend his lip the potencies that lie
Within that stone with which the usurers
Detect base metal, and which never errs.

IDYLL XIII.

Hylas.

NOT for us only, Nicias, (vain the dream,)
Sprung from what god soe'er, was Eros born:
Not to us only grace doth graceful seem,
Frail things who wot not of the coming morn.
No—for Amphitryon's iron-hearted son,
Who braved the lion, was the slave of one:—

A fair curled creature, Hylas was his name.

He taught him, as a father might his child,
All songs whereby himself had risen to fame;
Nor ever from his side would be beguiled
When noon was high, nor when white steeds convey
Back to heaven's gates the chariot of the day,

Nor when the hen's shrill brood becomes aware
Of bed-time, as the mother's flapping wings
Shadow the dust-browned beam. 'Twas all his care
To shape unto his own imaginings
And to the harness train his favourite youth,
Till he became a man in very truth.

Meanwhile, when kingly Jason steered in quest
Of the Gold Fleece, and chieftains at his side
Chos'n from all cities, proffering each her best,
To rich Iolchos came that warrior tried,
And joined him unto trim-built Argo's crew;
And with Alcmæna's son came Hylas too.

Through the great gulf shot Argo like a bird—
And by-and-bye reached Phasis, ne'er oerta'en
By those in-rushing rocks, that have not stirred
Since then, but bask, twin monsters, on the main.
But now, when waned the spring, and lambs were fed
In far-off fields, and Pleiads gleamed o'erhead,

That cream and flower of knighthood looked to sail.
They came, within broad Argo safely stowed,
(When for three days had blown the southern gale)
To Hellespont, and in Propontis rode
At anchor, where Cianian oxen now
Broaden the furrows with the busy plough.

They leapt ashore, and, keeping rank, prepared

Their evening meal: a grassy meadow spread
Before their eyes, and many a warrior shared

(Thanks to its verdurous stores) one lowly bed.

And while they cut tall marigolds from their stem
And sworded bulrush, Hylas slipt from them.

Water the fair lad went to seek and bring

To Heracles and stalwart Telamon,

(The comrades aye partook each other's fare,)

Bearing a brazen pitcher. And anon,

Where the ground dipt, a fountain he espied,
And rushes growing green about its side.

There rose the sea-blue swallow-wort, and there

The pale-hued maidenhair, with parsley green

And vagrant marsh flowers; and a revel rare

In the pool's midst the water-nymphs were seen

To hold, those maidens of unslumbrous eyes

Whom the belated peasant sees and flies.

And fast did Malis and Eunice cling,

And young Nycheia with her April face,

To the lad's hand, as stooping o'er the spring

He dipt his pitcher. For the young Greek's grace

Made their soft senses reel; and down he fell,

All of a sudden, into that black well.

So drops a red star suddenly from sky

To sea—and quoth some sailor to his mate :

“Up with the tackle, boy! the breeze is high.”

Him the nymphs pillowed, all disconsolate,
On their sweet laps, and with soft words beguiled ;
But Heracles was troubled for the child.

Forth went he ; Scythian-wise his bow he bore

And the great club that never quits his side ;

And thrice called ‘Hylas’—ne’er came lustier roar

From that deep chest. Thrice Hylas heard and tried
To answer, but in tones you scarce might hear ;
The water made them distant though so near.

And as a lion, when he hears the bleat

Of fawns among the mountains far away,

A murderous lion, and with hurrying feet

Bounds from his lair to his predestined prey :

So plunged the strong man in the untrodden brake—
(Lovers are maniacs)—for his darling’s sake.

He scoured far fields—what hill or oaken glen

Remembers not that pilgrimage of pain ?

His troth to Jason was forgotten then.

Long time the good ship tarried for those twain

With hoisted sails ; night came and still they cleared
The hatches, but no Heracles appeared.

On he was wandering, reckless where he trod,

So mad a passion on his vitals preyed:

While Hylas had become a blessèd god.

But the crew cursed the runaway who had stayed

Sixty good oars, and left him there to reach

Afoot bleak Phasis and the Colchian beach.

IDYLL XIV.

The Love of Thyonichus.

THYONICHUS. ÆSCHINES.

ÆSCHINES.

HAIL, sir Thyonichus.

THYONICHUS.

Æschines, to you.

ÆSCHINES.

I have missed thee.

THYONICHUS.

Missed me! Why what ails him now?

ÆSCHINES.

My friend, I am ill at ease.

THYONICHUS.

Then this explains
Thy leanness, and thy prodigal moustache
And dried-up curls. Thy counterpart I saw,

A wan Pythagorean, yesterday.
 He said he came from Athens: shoes he had none:
He pined, I'll warrant,—for a quartern loaf.

ÆSCHINES.

Sir, you will joke—But I've been outraged, sore,
 And by Cynisca. I shall go stark mad
 Ere you suspect—a hair would turn the scale.

THYONICHUS.

Such thou wert always, Æschines my friend.
 In lazy mood or trenchant, at thy whim
 The world must wag. But what's thy grievance now?

ÆSCHINES.

That Argive, Apis the Thessalian Knight,
 Myself, and gallant Cleonicus, supped
 Within my grounds. Two pullets I had slain,
 And a prime pig: and broached my Biblian wine;
 'Twas four years old, but fragrant as when new.
 We'd oyster-soup: it went down pleasantly.
 Well, we got on, and each must drain a cup
 To whom he fancied; only each must name.
 We named, and took our liquor as ordained;
 But she sate silent—this before my face.
 Fancy my feelings! “Speak—unless the wolf

(Some jester said) hath charmed your voice away.”
Then might her kindling face have fired a torch.
A wolf *had* charmed her: Wolf her neighbour’s son,
Dainty and tall, and fair in divers eyes:
For his illustrious sake it was she pined.
This had been breathed, just idly, in my ear:
Shame on my beard, I ne’er pursued the hint.
Well, when we four were deep amid our cups,
The Knight must sing ‘The Wolf’ (a local song)
Right through, for mischief. All at once she wept
Hot tears as girls of six years old might weep,
Clinging and clamouring round their mother’s lap.
And I, (you know my humour, friend of mine,)
Drove at her face, one, two! She gathered up
Her robes and vanished promptly through the door.
“And so I fail to please, false lady mine?
Another lies more welcome in thy lap?
Go warm that other’s heart: he’ll say thy tears
Are liquid pearls.” And as a swallow flies
Forth in a hurry, here or there to find
A mouthful for her brood among the eaves:
From her soft sofa passing-swift she fled
Through folding-doors and hall, with random feet:
‘The stag had gained his heath’: you know the rest.
Three weeks, a month, nine days and ten to that,
To-day’s the eleventh: and ’tis just two months

All but two days, since she and I were two.
Hence is my beard of more than Thracian growth.
Now Wolf is all to her: Wolf enters in
At midnight; I'm a cypher in her eyes;
The poor Megarian, doomed a castaway.
All would go right, if I could once *unlove*:
But now, you wot, the rat hath tasted tar.
And what may cure a swain at his wit's end
I know not: Simus, (true,) a mate of mine,
Loved Epichalchus' daughter, and took ship
And came home cured. And I will sail the seas.
Worse men, it may be better, are afloat,
I shall still prove an average man-at-arms.

THYONICHUS.

Now may thy love run smoothly, Æschines!
But should'st thou really mean a voyage out,
The freeman's best paymaster's Ptolemy.

ÆSCHINES.

What is he else?

THYONICHUS.

A gentleman: a man
Of wit and taste; the top of company;
Loyal to ladies; one whose eye is keen
For friends, and keener still for enemies.

Large in his bounties, he, in kingly sort,
Denies a boon to none: but, Æschines,
One should not ask too often. This premised,
If thou will clasp the military cloak
O'er thy right shoulder, and with legs astride
Await the onward rush of shielded men:
Hie thee to Egypt. Age o'ertakes us all;
Our temples first; then on o'er cheek and chin,
Slowly and surely, creep the frosts of Time.
Up and do somewhat, ere thy limbs are sere.

IDYLL XV.

The Two Ladies of Syracuse.

GORGO. PRAXINOA.

GORGO.

IS dame Praxinoa in?

PRAXINOA.

Yes, Gorgo dear.

How late you are—the only marvel is
You're here at all! Quick, Eunoa, find a chair
And fling a cushion on it.

GORGO.

Thanks.

PRAXINOA.

Sit down.

GORGO.

Oh what a thing is spirit! Here I am,
Praxinoa, safe at last from all that crowd
And all those chariots.....every street a mass

Of boots and soldiers' jackets!.....Oh! the road
Seemed endless.....and you live so far away!

PRAXINOA.

This land's-end den—for dwelling it is not—
My madcap hired to keep us twain apart
And stir up strife. 'Twas like him, odious pest!

GORGEO.

Nay, call not, dear, your lord, your Deinon, names
To the babe's face. Look how it stares at you!

PRAXINOA.

There, baby sweet, I never meant Papa.

GORGEO.

It understands, by 'r lady! dear Papa!

PRAXINOA.

Well, yesterday (that means what day you like)
'Papa' had rouge and hair-powder to buy;
He brought back salt! this oaf of six-foot-one!

GORGEO.

Just such another is that pickpocket
My Diocleides. He bought t' other day
Six fleeces at seven drachms, his last exploit.

What were they? Scraps of worn-out pedlar's-bags,
Sheer trash.—But put your gown and kirtle on;
And we'll to Ptolemy's, the sumptuous king,
To see the *Adonis*. As I hear, the queen
Provides us entertainment of the best.

PRAXINOA.

The grand can do things grandly. Tell me more,
You that have seen: be eyes unto the blind.

GORGO.

'Twere time we went—but all time's holiday
With idlers.

PRAXINOA.

Eunoa, pampered minx, the jug!
Set it down here—you cats would sleep all day
On cushions—Stir yourself, fetch water, quick!
Water's our first want. How she holds the jug!
Now, pour—not, cormorant, in that wasteful way—
You've drenched my dress, bad luck t'you! There,
enough:

I have made such toilet as my fates allowed.
Now for the key o' the plate-chest. Bring it, quick!

GORGO.

My dear, that full pelisse becomes you well.
What did it stand you in, straight off the loom?

PRAXINOA.

Don't ask me, Gorgo: two good pounds and more.
Then I gave all my mind to trimming it.

GORGO.

Well, 'tis a great success. Where have you left
My mantle, Eunoa, and my parasol?
Arrange me nicely. Babe, you'll bide at home:
Horses might eat you, ghosts!—Yes, cry your fill,
But we won't have you maimed. Now let's be off.
You, Phrygia, take and nurse the tiny thing:
Call the dog in: make fast the outer door.

PRAXINOA.

Gods! what a crowd! How, when shall we get past
This nuisance, these unending ant-like swarms?
Yet, Ptolemy, we owe thee thanks for much
Since heaven received thy sire! No miscreant now
Creeps Thug-like up, to maul the passer-by.
What games men played erewhile—men shaped in crime,
Birds of a feather, rascals every one!
—We're done for, Gorgo darling—here they are,
The Royal horse! Sweet sir, don't trample me!
That bay—the savage!—reared up straight on end!
Fly, Eunoa, can't you? Doggedly she stands.
He'll be his rider's death!—How glad I am

My babe's at home.

GORGO.

Praxinoa, never mind!

See, we're before them now, and they're in line.

PRAXINOA.

There, I'm myself. But from a child I feared
Horses, and slimy snakes. But haste we on:
A surging multitude is close behind.

GORGO [*to Old Lady*].

From the palace, mother?

OLD LADY.

Ay, child.

GORGO.

Is it fair

Of access?

OLD LADY.

Trying brought the Greeks to Troy.
Young ladies, they must try who would succeed.

GORGO.

The crone hath said her oracle and gone.
Women know all—how Adam married Eve.
—Praxinoa, look what crowds are round the door!

PRAXINOA.

Fearful. Your hand, please, Gorgo. Eunoa, you
 Hold Eutycheis—hold tight or you'll be lost.
 We'll enter in a body—hold us fast!
 Oh dear, my muslin dress is torn in two,
 Gorgo, already! Pray, good gentleman,
 (And happiness be yours) respect my robe!

STRANGER.

I could not if I would—nathless I will.

PRAXINOA.

They come in hundreds, and they push like swine.

STRANGER.

Lady, take courage: it is all well now.

PRAXINOA.

And now and ever be it well with thee,
 Sweet man, for shielding us! An honest soul
 And kindly. Oh! we're smothering Eunoa:
 Fight your way, trembler! Good! 'We're all in now,'
 As quoth the goodman, and shut out his wife.

GORGO.

Praxinoa, look! Note well this broidery first.

How exquisitely fine—too good for earth!
Empress Athene, what strange sempstress wrought
Such work? What painter painted, realized
Such pictures? Just like life they stand or move,
Facts and not fancies! What a thing is man!
How bright, how lifelike on his silvern couch
Lies, with youth's bloom scarce shadowing his cheek,
That dear Adonis, lovely e'en in death!

A STRANGER.

Bad luck t' you, cease your senseless pigeon's prate!
Their brogue is killing—every word a drawl!

GORGO.

Whence did he spring from? What is it to thee
If we two prattle? Order, sir, your slaves:
You're ordering Syracusan ladies now!
Corinthians bred (to tell you one fact more)
As was Bellerophon: islanders in speech,
For Dorians may talk Doric, I presume?

PRAXINOA.

Persephone! our master's yet unborn.
I've but one terror, lest he soil my gown.

GORGO.

Hush, dear. Argeia's daughter's going to sing

The Adonis: that accomplished vocalist
 Who has no rival in "*The Sailor's Grave*."
 Mark her coquetting with her music now.

Song.

Queen, who lov'st Golgi and the Sicel hill
 And Ida; Aphrodite radiant-eyed;
 The dainty-footed Hours from Acheron's rill
 Brought once again Adonis to thy side
 How changed in twelve short months! They travel
 slow,

Those precious Hours: we hail their advent still,
 For blessings do they bring to all below.

O Sea-born! thou didst erst, or legend lies,
 Shed on a woman's soul thy grace benign,
 And Berenice's dust immortalize.

O called by many names, at many a shrine!

For thy sweet sake doth Berenice's child
 (Herself a second Helen) deck with all

That's fair, Adonis. On his right are piled
 Ripe apples fallen from the oak-tree tall;

And silver caskets at his left support
 Toy-gardens, Syrian scents enshrined in gold

And alabaster, cakes of every sort

That in their ovens the pastrywomen mould,

When with white meal they mix all flowers that bloom,

Oil-cakes and honey-cakes. There stand pourtrayed
Each bird, each butterfly; and in the gloom
Of foliage climbing high, and downward weighed
By graceful blossoms, do the young Loves play
Like nightingales, and perch on every tree,
And flit, to try their wings, from spray to spray.
Then see the gold, the ebony! O see
The ivory-carven eagles, bearing up
To Zeus the boy who fills his royal cup!
Soft as a dream, such tap'stry gleams o'erhead
As the Milesian's self would gaze on, charmed.
But sweet Adonis hath his own sweet bed:
Next Aphrodite sleeps the roseate-armed,
A bridegroom of eighteen or nineteen years.
Kiss the smooth boyish lip—there's no sting there!
The bride hath found her own: all bliss be hers!
And him at dewy dawn we'll troop to bear
To where the breakers hiss against the shore:
There, with dishevelled dress and unbound hair,
Bare-bosomed all, our descant wild we'll pour:
“Thou haunt'st, Adonis, earth and heaven in turn,
Alone of heroes. Agamemnon ne'er
Could compass this, nor Aias stout and stern:
Not Hector, eldest-born of her who bare
Ten sons, not Patrocles, nor safe-returned

From Ilium Pyrrhus, such distinction earned:
Nor, elder yet, the sons of Lapithæ,
Of Pelops and Deucalion, and the crown
Of Greece, Pelasgians. Gracious may'st thou be,
Adonis, now: pour new-year's blessings down!
Right welcome dost thou come, Adonis dear:
Come when thou wilt, thou'lt find a welcome here."

GORG0.

'Tis fine, Praxinoa! How I envy her
Her learning, and still more her luscious voice!
We must go home: my husband's supperless:
And, in that state, he's simply vinegar.
Don't cross his path when hungry! So farewell,
Adonis, and be housed 'mid welfare aye!

IDYLL XVI.

The Value of Song.

WHAT fires the Muse's, what the minstrel's lays?
Aye some immortal's or some hero's praise.
Heaven is their theme, as heavenly is their birth:
We, of earth earthy, sing the sons of earth.
Yet few, of all who see the gray morn rise,
Lift not their latch, and hail with glad surprise
Our Songs, then send them guerdonless away.
Barefoot and angry, homeward journey they,
To taunt him sore who sent them forth in vain:
Crouched in their lean lone kennel they remain,
Their face on their chill knees; once more returned
To their drear lodging, and with nothing earned.
Where are those good old times? Who thanks us, who,
For our good word? Men list not now to do
Great deeds and worthy of the minstrel's verse:
Vassals of gain, their hand is on their purse,
Their eyes on lucre; they will give away
Nor gold nor dross; and this is what they say:—

“Kin before kith; to prosper is my prayer;
 Poets, we know, are heaven’s peculiar care.
 We’ve Homer; and what other’s worth a thought?
 I call him chief of bards who costs me nought.”

Yet what if all your chests with gold are lined?
 Is this enjoying wealth? Oh fools and blind!
 Part on your own selves, on the minstrel spend
 Part; and your kindred and your kind befriend:
 And to the gods give glory without end.
 And be not churlish hosts, but send away
 The guest well-filled, should he be loth to stay.
 And reverence most the priests of sacred song:
 So, when hell hides you, shall your names live long;
 Not doomed to wail on Acheron’s sunless sands,
 Like some poor hind, the inward of whose hands
 The spade hath knarled and knotted, born to groan,
 Poor sire’s poor offspring, hapless Penury’s own!

Royal Alcæus and Antiochus gave
 The monthly banquet to full many a slave;
 Many a fair flock did Scopas’ stable house,
 The calves stood lowing by the hornèd cows;
 And, marshalled by the good Philondæ’s swains,
 Myriads of choice sheep basked on Cranon’s plains.
 Yet had their glories ended, on the day

When their sweet spirit dispossessed its clay,
Te hated Acheron's ample barge resigned:
Nameless, their stored-up luxury left behind,
With the lorn dead through ages had they lain,
Had not a minstrel bade them live again:
The bard of Ceos, who in woven words
Held converse with his harp of divers chords,
And gave to each swift steed his meed of praise,
When from the lists he bore his master crowned with
bays.

Forgot were Lycia's chiefs, and Hector's hair
Of gold, and Cyenus femininely fair;
But that bards bring old battles back to mind.
Odysseus' self, who roamed amongst mankind
A hundred years and more, reached utmost hell
Alive, and 'scaped the giant's hideous cell,
Had lived and died: Eumæus and his swine;
Philæteus, busy with his herded kine;
And great Laërtes' self, had passed away,
Were not their names preserved in Homer's lay.
Through song alone may man true glory taste;
The dead man's riches his survivors waste.

But count the waves, with yon gray wind-swept main
Borne shoreward: from a red brick wash his stain
In some pool's violet depths: 'twill task thee yet

To reach the heart on baleful avarice set.
To such I say Fare well: let theirs be store
Of wealth; but let them always crave for more:
Horses and mules inferior things *I* find
To the esteem and love of all mankind.

But to what mortal's roof may I repair,
I and my Muse, and find a welcome there?
I and my Muse: for minstrels fare but ill,
Reft of those maids, who know the mightiest's will.
The cycle of the years, it flags not yet;
In many a chariot many a steed shall sweat:
And one, to manhood grown, my lays shall claim,
Whose deeds shall rival great Achilles' fame,
Who from stout Aias might have won the prize
On Simois' plain, where Phrygian Ilus lies.
Now, in their sunset home on Libya's heel,
Phœnicia's sons unwonted chillness feel:
Now, with his targe of willow 't his breast,
The Syracusan bears his spear in rest.
Amongst these Hiero arms him for the war,
Eager to fight as warriors fought of yore;
The plumes float darkling o'er his helmèd brow.
O Zeus, the sire most glorious; and O thou,
Empress Athene; and thou, damsel fair,
Who with thy mother wast decreed to bear

Rule o'er rich Corinth, o'er that city of pride
Beside whose walls Anapus' waters glide:—
May ill winds waft across the Southern sea
(Of late a legion, now but two or three,)
Far from our isle, our foes; the doom to tell,
To wife and child, of those they loved so well;
While the old race enjoy once more the lands
Spoiled and insulted erst by alien hands!

And fair and fruitful may their cornlands be!
Their flocks in thousands bleat upon the lea,
Fat and full-fed: their kine, as home they wind,
The lagging traveller of his rest remind!
With might and main their fallows let them till:
Till comes the seedtime, and cicalas trill
(Hid from the toilers of the hot midday
In the thick leafage) on the topmost spray!
O'er shield and spear their webs let spiders spin,
And none so much as name the battle-din!
Then Hiero's lofty deeds may minstrels bear
Beyond the Scythian ocean-main, and where
Within those ample walls, with asphalt made
Time-proof, Semiramis her empire swayed.
I am but a single voice: but many a bard
Beside me do those heavenly maids regard:
May those all love to sing, 'mid earth's acclaim,
Of Sicel Arethuse, and Hiero's fame.

O Songs, O kingborn sisters, who hold dear
Minyan Orchomenos, once the Thebans fear:
I go not forth unbid; but wheresoe'er
Men bid me, nothing loth I house me there,
I and my Muse: and ye shall quit me ne'er!
What joy could life afford, if Song could die?
May we be comrades aye, my Songs and I.

IDYLL XVII.

The Praise of Ptolemy.

WITH Zeus begin, sweet sisters, end with Zeus,
When ye would sing the sovereign of the skies:
But first among mankind rank Ptolemy;
First, last, and midmost; being past compare.
Those mighty ones of old, half men half gods,
Wrought deeds that shine in many a subtle strain;
I, no unpractised minstrel, sing but him;
Divinest ears disdain not minstrelsy.
But as a woodman sees green Ida rise
Pine upon pine, and ponders which to fell
First of those myriads; even so I pause
Where to begin the chapter of his praise:
For thousand and ten thousand are the gifts
Wherewith high heaven hath graced the kingliest king.

Was not he born to compass noblest ends,
Lagus' own son, so soon as he matured

Schemes such as ne'er had dawned on meaner minds?
Zeus doth esteem him as the blessèd gods;
In the sire's courts his golden mansion stands.
And near him Alexander sits and smiles,
The turbaned Persian's dread; and, fronting both,
Rises the stedfast adamantine seat
Piled erst for tauricidal Heracles.
Who there holds revels with his heavenly mates,
And sees, with joy exceeding, children rise
On children; for that Zeus exempts from age
And death their frames who sprang from Heracles:
And Ptolemy, like Alexander, claims
From him; his gallant son their common sire.
And when, the banquet o'er, the Strong Man wends,
Cloyed with rich nectar, home unto his wife,
This kinsman hath in charge his cherished shafts
And bow; and that his knarled and knotted club;
And both to white-limbed Hebe's bower of bliss
Convoy the bearded warrior and his arms.

Then how among wise ladies—blest the pair
That reared her!—peerless Berenice shone!
Dione's sacred child, the Cyprian queen,
O'er that sweet bosom passed her taper hands:
And hence, 'tis said, no man loved woman e'er
As Ptolemy loved her. She o'er-repaid

His love; so, nothing doubting, he could leave
His substance in his loyal children's care,
And rest with her, fond husband with fond wife.
She that loves not bears sons, but all unlike
Their father: for her heart was elsewhere.

O Aphrodite, matchless e'en in heaven
For beauty, thou didst love her; wouldst not let
Thy Berenice cross the wailful waves:
But thy hand snatched her—to the blue lake bound
Else, and the dead's grim ferryman—and enshrined
With thee, to share thy honours. There she sits,
To mortals ever kind, and passion soft
Inspires, and makes the lover's burden light.
Dark-browed Eunice, linked with Tydeus, bare
Diomed the slayer, famed in Calydon:
And deep-veiled Thetis unto Peleus gave
The javelineer Achilles. Thou wast born
Of Berenice, Ptolemy by name
And by descent, a warrior's warrior child.
Cos from its mother's arms her babe received,
Its destined nursery, on its natal day:
'Twas there Antigone's daughter in her pangs
Cried to the goddess who could bid them cease:
Who soon was at her side, and lo! her limbs
Forgot their anguish, and a child was born

Fair, its sire's self. Cos saw, and shouted loud;
Handled the babe all tenderly, and spake:

“Wake, babe, to bliss: prize me, as Phœbus prized
His azure-spherèd Delos: grace the hill
Of Triops, and the Dorians' sister shores,
As king Apollo graced Rhœnaia's isle.”

So spake the isle. An eagle high o'erhead
Poised in the clouds screamed thrice, the prophet-bird
Of Zeus, and sent by him. For awful kings
All are his care, those chieftiest on whose birth
He smiled: exceeding glory waits on them:
Theirs is the sovereignty of land and sea.
But if a myriad realms spread far and wide
O'er earth, if myriad nations till the soil
To which heaven's rain gives increase: yet what land
Is green as low-lying Egypt, when the Nile
Wells forth and piecemeal breaks the sodden glebe?
Where are like cities, peopled by like men?
For he hath seen three hundred towns arise,
Three thousand, and three myriad; and o'er all
He rules, the prince of heroes, Ptolemy.
Claims half Phœnicia, and half Araby,
Syria and Libya, and the Æthiops dark;
Sways the Pamphylian and Cilician braves,

The Lycian and the Carian trained to war,
And all the isles: for never fleet like his
Rode upon ocean: land and sea alike
And sounding rivers hail king Ptolemy.
Many are his horsemen, many his targeteers,
Whose burdened breast is bright with clashing steel:
Light are all royal treasures, weighed with his.
For wealth from all climes travels day by day
To his rich realm, a hive of prosperous peace.
No foeman's tramp scares monster-peopled Nile,
Waking to war her far-off villages:
No armed robber from his war-ship leaps
To spoil the herds of Egypt. For a prince
Sits throned in her broad plains, in whose right arm
Quivers the spear, the bright-haired Ptolemy.
Like a true king, he guards with might and main
The wealth his sires' arm won him and his own.
Nor strown all idly o'er his sumptuous halls
Lie piles that seem the work of labouring ants.
The holy homes of gods are rich therewith;
Theirs are the firstfruits, earnest eye of more.
And freely mighty kings thereof partake,
Freely great cities, freely honoured friends.
None entered e'er the sacred lists of song,
Whose lips could breathe sweet music, but he gained
Fair guerdon at the hand of Ptolemy.

And Ptolemy do music's votaries hymn
For his good gifts—hath man a fairer lot
Than to have earned fair fame among mankind?
The Atridæ's name abides, while all the wealth
Won from the sack of Priam's stately home
Went to the winds, and shall return no more.
Ptolemy, he only, treads a path whose dust
Burns with the footprints of his ancestors,
And overlays those footprints with his own.
He raised rich shrines to mother and to sire,
There reared their forms in ivory and gold,
Passing in beauty, to befriend mankind.
Thighs of fat oxen oftentimes he burns
On crimsoning altars, as the months roll on,
He and his stedfast wife. No fairer bride
E'er clasped her lord in royal palaces:
And her heart's love her brother-husband won.
In such blest union joined the immortal pair
Whom queenly Rhea bore, and heaven obeys:
One couch the maiden of the rainbow decks
With myrrh-dipt hands for Here and for Zeus.

Now farewell, prince! I rank thee aye with gods:
And read this lesson to the afterdays,
Mayhap they'll prize it: 'Honour is of Zeus.'

IDYLL XVIII.

The Bridal of Helen.

WHILOME, in Lacedæmon,
Tripped many a maiden fair
To gold-tressed Menelaus' halls,
With hyacinths in her hair:
Twelve to the Painted Chamber,
The queenliest in the land,
The clustered loveliness of Greece,
Came dancing hand in hand.
For Helen, Tyndarus' daughter,
Had just been wooed and won,
Helen the darling of the world,
By Atreus' younger son:
For this with woven footsteps
They beat the floor, and sang
Their bridal-hymn of triumph
Till all the palace rang.

“Not waking yet, sweet bridegroom?
Art thou o'erfond of sleep?”

Or hast thou leadenweighted limbs?
Or hadst thou drunk too deep
When thou didst fling thee to thy lair?
Betimes thou should'st have sped,
If sleep were all thy purpose,
Unto thy bachelor's bed:
And left her in her mother's arms
To nestle, and to play
A girl among her girlish mates
Till deep into the day.
For not alone tomorrow
And not to-day alone,
But through the days and through the years
Thou hast her for thy own.

“Nay! heaven, O happy bridegroom,
Smiled as thou enteredst in
To Sparta, like thy brother kings,
And told thee thou should'st win!
What hero son-in-law of Zeus
Hath e'er aspired to be?
Yet lo! one coverlid enfolds
The child of Zeus, and thee.
Ne'er did a thing so lovely
Roam the Achaian lea.

“And who shall match her offspring,
If babes are like their mother?
For we were playmates once, and ran
And raced with one another
(All varnished, warrior fashion)
Along Eurotas' tide,
Thrice eighty gentle maidens,
Each in her girlhood's pride:
Yet none of all seemed faultless,
If placed by Helen's side.

“As peers the nascent Morning
Over thy shades, O Night,
When Winter disenchains the land,
And Spring goes forth in white:
So Helen peered above us,
All loveliness and light.

“As climbs aloft some cypress,
Garden or glade to grace;
As the Thessalian courser lends
A lustre to the race:
Such pride had Lacedæmon
In Helen's rosebud face.

“And who into the basket e'er
The yarn so deftly drew,
Or through the mazes of the web
So well the shuttle threw,
And severed from the framework
So closelywov'n a warp:
And who could wake with masterhand
Such music from the harp,
To broadlimbed Pallas tuning
And Artemis her lay—
As Helen, Helen in whose eyes
The Loves for ever play?

“O bright, O beautiful, for thee
Are matron-cares begun.
We to green paths and blossomed meads
With dawn of morn must run,
And cull a breathing chaplet;
And still our dream shall be,
Helen, of thee, as weanling lambs
Yearn in the pasture for the dams
That nursed their infancy.
For thee the lowly lotus-bed
We'll spoil, and plait a crown
To hang upon the shadowy plane;
For thee will we drop down

(’Neath that same shadowy platan)
Oil from our silver urn ;
And carven on the bark shall be
This sentence, ‘Hallow Helen’s tree’ ;
In Dorian letters, legibly
For all men to discern.

“Now farewell, bride, and bridegroom
Blest in thy new-found sire !
May Leto, mother of the brave,
Bring babes at your desire,
And holy Cypris either’s breast
With mutual love inspire :
And Zeus the son of Cronos
Grant blessings without end,
From princely sire to princely son
For ever to descend.

“Sleep on, and love and longing
Breathe in each other’s breast ;
But fail not when the morn returns
To rouse you from your rest :
With dawn shall we be stirring,
When, lifting high his fair

And feathered neck, the earliest bird
To clarion to the dawn is heard.
O god of brides and bridals,
Sing 'Happy, happy pair!'"

IDYLL XIX.

Love Stealing Money.

ONCE thievish Love the honeyed hives would rob,
When a bee stung him: soon he felt a throb
Through all his finger-tips, and, wild with pain,
Blew on his hands and stamped and jumped in vain.
To Aphrodite then he told his woe:
'How can a thing so tiny hurt one so?'
She smiled and said; 'Why thou'rt a tiny thing,
As is the bee; yet sorely thou canst sting.'

IDYLL XX.

Town and Country.

ONCE I would kiss Eunice. "Back," quoth she,
And screamed and stormed; "a sorry clown kiss
me?"

Your country compliments, I like not such;
No lips but gentles' would I deign to touch.
Ne'er dream of kissing me: alike I shun
Your face, your language, and your tigerish fun.
How winning are your tones, how fine your air!
Your beard how silken and how sweet your hair!
Pah! you've a sick man's lips, a blackamoor's hand:
Your breath's defilement. Leave me, I command."

Thrice spat she on her robe, and, muttering low,
Scanned me, with half-shut eyes, from top to toe:
Brought all her woman's witcheries into play,
Still smiling in a set sarcastic way,
Till my blood boiled, my visage crimson grew
With indignation, as a rose with dew.

And so she left me, inly to repine
That such as she could flout such charms as mine.

O shepherds, tell me true! Am not I fair?
Am I transformed? For lately I did wear
Grace as a garment; and my cheeks, o'er them
Ran the rich growth like ivy round the stem.
Like fern my tresses o'er my temples streamed;
White, o'er my eyebrows dark, my forehead gleamed:
My eyes were of Athene's radiant blue,
My mouth was milk, its accents honeydew.
Then I could sing—my tones were soft indeed!—
To pipe or flute or flageolet or reed:
And me did every maid that roams the fell
Admire and love: not so this city belle.
She scorns the herdsman; knows not how divine
Bacchus ranged once the valleys with his kine;
How Cypris, maddened for a herdsman's sake,
Deigned upon Phrygia's mountains to partake
His cares: and wooed, and wept, Adonis in the brake.
What was Endymion, sweet Selene's love?
A herdsman's lad. Yet came she from above,
Down to green Latmos, by his side to sleep.
And did not Rhea for a herdsman weep?
Didst not thou, Zeus, become a wandering bird,
To win the love of one who drove a herd?

Selene, Cybele, Cypris, all loved swains :
Eunice, loftier-bred, their suit disdains.
Henceforth, by hill or hall, thy swain disown,
Cypris, and sleep the livelong night alone.

IDYLL XXI.

The Fishermen.

WANT quickens wit: Want's pupils needs must
work,

O Diophantus: for the child of toil
Is grudged his very sleep by carking cares:
Or, if he taste the blessedness of night,
Thought for the morrow soon warns slumber off.

Two ancient fishers once lay side by side
On piled-up sea-wrack in their wattled hut,
Its leafy wall their curtain. Near them lay
The weapons of their trade, basket and rod,
Hooks, weed-encumbered nets, and cords and oars,
And, propped on rollers, an infirm old boat.
Their pillow was a scanty mat, eked out
With caps and garments: such the ways and means,
Such the whole treasury of the fishermen.
They knew no luxuries: owned nor door nor dog;
Their craft their all, their mistress Poverty:

Their only neighbour Ocean, who for aye
Round their lorn hut came floating lazily.

Ere the moon's chariot was in mid-career,
The fishers girt them for the toil they loved,
And banished slumber from unwilling eyes,
And roused their dreamy intellects with song:—

“They say that soon flit summer-nights away,
Because all lingering is the summer day:
Friend, it is false; for dream on dream have I
Dreamed, and the dawn still reddens not the sky.
How? am I wandering? or does night pass slow?”

“You wrong the gracious summer, reasoning so:
'Tis not that wilful seasons have gone wrong,
But care maims slumber, and the nights seem long.”

“Didst thou e'er study dreams? For visions fair
I saw last night; and fairly thou should'st share
The wealth I dream of, as the fish I catch.
Now, for sheer sense, I reckon few thy match;
And, for a vision, he whose motherwit
Is his sole tutor best interprets it.
And now we've time the matter to discuss:
For who could labour, lying here (like us)

Pillowed on leaves and neighboured by the deep,
Or sleeping amid thorns no easy sleep?
In rich men's halls the lamps are burning yet;
But fish come always to the rich man's net."

"To me the vision of the night relate;
Speak, and reveal the riddle to thy mate."

"Last evening, as I plied my watery trade,
(Not on an o'erfull stomach—we had made
Betimes a meagre meal, as you can vouch,)
I fell asleep; and lo! I seemed to crouch
Among the boulders, and for fish to wait,
Still dangling, rod in hand, my vagrant bait.
A big fish caught it: (as the pudding-dish
Is the dog's dream, so I but dream of fish:)
Fast clung he to the hooks; his blood outwelled;
Bent with his struggling was the rod I held:
I spread my hands: my efforts made me ache:
'How, with a line thus slight, this monster take?'
Then, hinting at the pain I had undergone,
Quoth I, 'Would'st bite me? Thou't be bit anon.'
And drew him unresisting to the shore.
A glance convinced me I need toil no more:
'Twas a gold fish, pure metal every inch
That I had captured. I began to flinch:

‘What if this beauty be the sea-king’s joy,
Or azure Amphitrite’s treasured toy?’
With care I disengaged him—not to rip
With hasty hook the gilding from his lip:
And with a tow-line landed him, and swore
Never to set my foot on ocean more,
But with my gold live royally ashore.
So I awoke: and, comrade, lend me now
Thy wits, for I am troubled for my vow.”

“Ne’er quake: you’re pledged to nothing, for no
prize

You gained or gazed on. Dreams are nought but lies.
Yet may this dream bear fruit; if, wide-awake
And not in dreams, you’ll fish the neighbouring lake.
Fish that are meat you’ll there mayhap behold,
Not die of famine, amid dreams of gold.

IDYLL XXII.

The Sons of Leda.

THE pair I sing, that Ægis-armèd Zeus
Gave unto Leda; Castor and the dread
Of bruisers Polydeuces, whenso'er
His harnessed hands were lifted for the fray.
Twice and again I sing the manly sons
Of Leda, those Twin Brethren, Sparta's own:
Who shield the warrior on the deadly scarp,
The horse wild-plunging o'er the crimson field,
The ship that, disregarding in her pride
Star-set and star-rise, meets disastrous gales:—
Such gales as pile the billows mountain-high,
E'en at their own wild will, round stem or stern:
Dash o'er the hold, the timbers rive in twain,
Till mast and tackle dangle in mid-air
Shivered like toys, and, as the night draws on,
The rain of heaven falls fast, and, lashed by wind
And iron hail, the great sea makes a noise.
Then can they draw from out the nether abyss

Both craft and crew, each deeming he must die :
And lo the winds are still, and all the deep
Is sunshine, and the routed clouds decamp,
And once more shines the Great Bear and the Less,
And, 'twixt the Asses dimly seen, the Crib
Foretels fair voyage to the mariner.
O saviours, O companions of mankind,
Matchless on horse or harp, in lists or lay ;
Which of ye twain demands my earliest song ?
Of both I sing ; of Polydeuces first.

The Argo, 'scaped the inrush of the rocks,
And snow-clad Pontus with his baleful jaws,
Came to Bebrycia with her heaven-sprung freight ;
There by one ladder disembarked a host
Of Heroes from the decks of Jason's ship.
On the low beach, to leeward of the cliff,
They leapt, and piled their beds, and lit their fires :
Castor meanwhile, the bridler of the steed,
And Polydeuces of the nut-brown face,
Had wandered from their mates ; and, wildered both,
Searched through the boskage of the hill, and found
Beneath a slab of rock a bubbling spring
Brimful of purest water. In the depths
Below, like crystal or like silver gleamed
The pebbles : high above it pine and plane

And poplar rose, and cypress tipt with green;
With all rich flowers that throng the mead, when wanes
The Spring, sweet workshops of the honey-bee.
And there sat basking one of giant bulk
And grisly mien: hard knocks had stov'n his ears:
Broad were his shoulders, vast his orbèd chest;
Like a wrought statue rose his iron frame:
And nigh the shoulder on each brawny arm
Stood out the muscles, huge as rolling stones
Caught by some rain-swoln river and shapen smooth
By its wild eddyings: and o'er nape and spine
Hung, balanced by the claws, a lion's skin.
Him Leda's champion son accosted first:—

POLYDEUCES.

Luck to thee, stranger! Pray, who owns this place?

AMYCUS.

'Tis luck indeed to see an unknown face.

POLYDEUCES.

Fear not, we're like our sires, good men and true.

AMYCUS.

I fear not aught, nor need advice from you.

POLYDEUCES.

What art thou? sullen churl, or haughty king?

AMYCUS.

I'm what you see: and I'm not trespassing.

POLYDEUCES.

On my land welcome you may come and go.

AMYCUS.

I ask no welcome, and have none to shew.

POLYDEUCES.

Have I your leave from yonder spring to sip?

AMYCUS.

You'll see, when thirst has parched your gasping lip.

POLYDEUCES.

Can gold cajole you? or if not, what can?

AMYCUS.

Nay, you must fight, and singly, man with man.

POLYDEUCES.

With fists? or foot to foot, and eye to eye?

AMYCUS.

Look to your fists; and all your science try.

POLYDEUCES.

This arm, these gauntlets, who shall dare withstand?

AMYCUS.

I: and "the Bruiser's" is no woman's hand.

POLYDEUCES.

And what prize waits the victor in the strife?

AMYCUS.

You'll be my master, or I yours, for life.

POLYDEUCES.

By crimson-crested cocks such stakes are won.

AMYCUS.

Lions or cocks, we'll fight for these or none.

He spoke, and clutched a hollow shell, and blew
The trumpet. Straightway to the shadowy pine
Clustering they came, as loud it pealed and long,
Bebrycia's bearded warriors. Castor too,
The star of tournament, went forth and called
From the Magnesian ship the Heroes all.

Then either champion armed with coils of hide

His hands, and round his limbs bound ponderous bands,
And, breathing bloodshed, stept into the ring.
First there was much manœuvring, who should catch
The sunlight on his rear: but thou didst foil,
O Polydeuces, valour by address;
And full on Amycus' face the hot noon smote.
He, in a rage, came up with outspread arms;
But the foe met his onset with a blow
On the mid-check: he thereat angrier still
Made the fight hot, and laid on, stooping low.
Loud the Bebrycians cheered, and in reply
The Heroes shouted 'Polydeuces wins;'
Alarmed lest haply in that narrow place
The giant's bulk should bear their warrior down.
But, shifting yet still there, the son of Zeus
Scored him with swift exchange of left and right,
And checked the onrush of the sea-god's child
Fierce though it was: till, reeling with his wounds,
He stood, and from his lips spat crimson blood.
Cheered with one voice the princes, when they saw
The lips and jowl all seamed with piteous scars,
And the swollen visage and the half-closed eyes.
Still the prince teased him, feinting here or there
A thrust; and when he saw him helpless all,
Let drive beneath his eyelids at his nose,
And laid it bare to the bone. The stricken man

Measured his length supine amid the fern.
Keen was the fighting when he rose again,
Deadly the blows their sturdy gauntlets dealt.
But while Bebrycia's favourite sparred round chest
And utmost shoulder, his resistless foe
Made his whole face one mass of hideous wounds.
While the one sweated all his bulk away,
And, late a giant, seemed a pigmy now,
The other's limbs waxed ever as he fought
In semblance and in size. But how the son
Of Zeus brought low that man of appetite,
Tell, Muse, for thine is knowledge: I unfold
A secret not mine own; at thy behest
Speak or am dumb, nor speak but as thou wilt.

Amycus, athirst to do some doughty deed,
Stooping aside from Polydeuces' lunge
Locked their left hands; and, stepping out, upheaved
From his right hip his ponderous other-arm.
And hit and harmed had been Amyclæ's king;
But, ducking low, he smote with one strong fist
The foe's left temple—fast the life-blood streamed
From the grim rift—and dropped upon his arm.
While with his left he reached the mouth, and made
The set teeth tingle; and, redoubling aye
His plashing blows, made havoc of his face

And mincemeat of his cheeks, till all abroad
 He lay, and throwing up his arms disclaimed
 The strife, for he was even at death's door.
 No wrong the vanquished suffered at thy hands,
 O Polydeuces; but he swore an oath
 Calling his sire Poseidon from the depths,
 Ne'er to do violence to a stranger more.

Thy tale, O prince, is told. Now sing I thee,
 Castor the Tyndarid, lord of rushing horse
 And shaking javelin, corsleted in brass.

PART II.

The sons of Zeus had borne two maids away,
 Leucippus' daughters. Straight in hot pursuit
 Went the two brethren, sons of Aphareus,
 Lynceus and Idas bold, their plighted lords.
 And when the tomb of Aphareus was gained,
 All leapt from out their cars, and front to front
 Stood, with their ponderous spears and orbèd shields.
 First Lynceus shouted loud from 'neath his helm:

“Whence, sirs, this lust for strife? Why, sword
 in hand,
 Raise ye this coil about your neighbours' wives?

To us Leucippus these his daughters gave,
Long ere ye saw them: they are ours on oath.
Ye, coveting (to your shame) your neighbour's bed
And kine and asses and whate'er is his,
Suborned the man and stole our wives by bribes.
How often spake I thus before your face,
Yea I myself, though scant I am of phrase:
'Not thus, fair sirs, do honourable men
Seek to woo wives whose troth is given elsewhere.
Lo, broad is Sparta, broad thè hunting-grounds
Of Elis: fleecy Arcady is broad,
And Argos and Messene and the towns
To westward, and the long Sisyphian reach.
There 'neath her parents' roof dwells many a maid
Second to none in goodliness or wit:
Wed of all these, and welcome, which ye will,
For all men court the kinship of the brave;
And ye are as your sires, and they whose blood
Runs in your mother's veins, the flower of war.
Nay, sirs, but let us bring this thing to pass;
Then, taking counsel, choose meet brides for you.'
So I ran on; but o'er the shifting seas
The wind's breath blew my words, that found no grace
With you, for ye defied the charmer's voice.
Yet listen to me now if ne'er before:
Lo! we are kinsmen by the father's side.

But if ye lust for war, if strife must break
 Forth among kin, and bloodshed quench our feud,
 Bold Polydeuces then shall hold his hands
 And his cousin Idas from the abhorrèd fray :
 While I and Castor, the two younger-born,
 Try war's arbitrement ; so spare our sires
 Sorrow exceeding. In one house one dead
 Sufficeth : let the others glad their mates,
 To the bride-chamber passing, not the grave,
 And o'er yon maids sing jubilee. Well it were
 At cost so small to lay so huge a strife."

He spoke—his words heaven gave not to the winds.
 They, the two first-born, disarrayed and piled
 Their arms, while Lynceus stept into the ring,
 And at his shield's rim shook his stalwart spear.
 And Castor likewise poised his quivering lance ;
 High waved the plume on either warrior's helm.
 First each at other thrust with busy spear
 Where'er he spied an inch of flesh exposed :
 But lo ! both spearpoints in their wicker shields
 Lodged ere a blow was struck, and snapt in twain.
 Then they unsheathed their swords, and framed new
 modes
 Of slaughter : pause or respite there was none.
 Oft Castor on broad shield and plumèd helm

Lit, and oft keen-eyed Lynceus pierced his shield,
Or grazed his crest of crimson. But anon,
As Lynceus brought his blade from his left knee,
Back with the left sprang Castor and struck off
His fingers: from the maimed limb dropped the sword.
And, flying straightway, for his father's tomb
He made, where gallant Idas sat and viewed
The battle of the brethren. But the child
Of Zeus rushed in, and with his broadsword drove
Through flank and navel, sundering with swift stroke
His vitals: Lynceus tottered and he fell,
And o'er his eyelids rushed the dreamless sleep.
Nor did their mother see her elder son
Come a fair bridegroom to his Cretan home.
For Idas wrenched from off the dead man's tomb
A jutting slab, to hurl it at the man
Who had slain his brother. Then did Zeus bring aid,
And struck the marble fabric from his grasp,
And with red lightning burned his frame to dust.
So doth he fight with odds who dares provoke
The Tyndarids, great sons of greater sire.

Now farewell, Leda's sons: and honour aye
The songs I sing. What minstrel loves not well
The Tyndarids, and Helen, and the chiefs
That trod Troy down for Menelaus' sake?

The bard of Chios wrought your royal deeds
Into his lays, who sang of Priam's state,
And fights 'neath Ilium's walls; of sailor Greeks,
And of Achilles towering in the strife.
Yet take from me whate'er of high sweet song
Heaven hath accorded to my low estate!
Best of all gifts the gods love minstrelsy.

IDYLL XXIII.

Love Avenged.

A LAD deep-dipt in passion pined for one
Whose mood was froward as her face was fair.
Lovers she loathed, for tenderness she had none:
Ne'er knew what Love was like, nor how he bare
A bow, and arrows to make young maids smart:
Proof to all speech, all access, seemed her heart.

So he found nought his furnace to allay;
No quiver of lips, no lighting of kind eyes,
Nor rose-flushed cheek; no talk, no lover's play
Was deigned him: but as forest-beasts are shy
Of hound and hunter, so with man dealt she;
Fierce was her lip, her eyes gleamed dangerously.

Her tyrant's-heart was imaged in her face,
That flushed, then altering put on blank disdain.
Yet, even then, her anger had its grace,
And made her lover fall in love again.
At last, unable to endure his flame,
To the fell threshold all in tears he came :

Kissed it, and lifted up his voice and said :
"O heart of stone, O curst and cruel maid
Unworthy of all love, by lions bred,
See, my last offering at thy feet is laid,
The halter that shall hang me ! So no more
For my sake, lady, need thy heart be sore.

Whither thou doom'st me, thither must I fare.
There is a path, that whoso treads hath ease
(Men say) from love ; Forgetfulness is there.
But if I drain that chalice to the lees,
I may not quench the love I have for you ;
Now at your gates I cast my long adieu.

Your future I foresee. The rose is gay,
And passing-sweet the violet of the spring :
Yet time despoils them, and they soon decay.
The lily droops and dies, that lustrous thing ;
The solid-seeming snowdrift melts full fast ;
And maiden's bloom is rare, but may not last.

The time shall come, when you shall feel as I;
And, with seared heart, weep many a bitter tear.
But, maiden, grant one farewell courtesy.

When you come forth, and see me hanging here,
E'en at your door, forget not my hard case;
But pause and weep me for a moment's space.

And drop one tear, and cut me down, and spread
O'er me some garment, for a funeral pall,
That wrapped thy limbs: and kiss me—let the dead
Be privileged thus highly—last of all.
You need not fear me: not if your disdain
Changed into fondness could I live again.

And scoop a grave, to hide my loves and me:
And thrice, at parting, say, 'My friend's no more:'
Add if you list, 'a faithful friend was he;'
And look! I've scratched my epitaph on your door;
*Stranger, Love slew him. Pass not by, until
Thou hast paused and said, 'His mistress used him ill.'*

This said, he grasped a stone: that hideous stone
At the mid threshold 'neath the wall he laid,
And o'er the beam the light cord soon was thrown,
And his neck noosed. In air the body swayed,
Its footstool spurned away. Forth came once more
The maid, and saw him hanging at her door.

No struggle of heart it cost her, ne'er a tear
She wept o'er that young life, nor shunned to soil,
By contact with the corpse, her woman's-gear.
But on she went to watch the athletes' toil,
Then made for her loved haunt, the riverside:
And there she met the god she had defied.

For on a marble pedestal Eros stood
Fronting the pool: the statue leaped, and smote
And slew that miscreant. All the stream ran blood;
And to the top a girl's cry seemed to float.
Rejoice, O lovers, for the scorner fell;
And, maids, be kind; for Love deals justice well.

IDYLL XXIV.

The Infant Hercules.

ALCMENA once had washed and given the breast
To Hercules, a babe of ten months old,
And Iphicles his junior by a night;
And cradled both within a brazen shield,
A gorgeous trophy, which Amphitryon erst
Had stript from Ptereläus fall'n in fight.
She stroked their baby brows, and thus she said:

“Sleep, children mine, a light luxurious sleep,
Brother with brother: sleep, my boys, my life:
Blest in your slumber, in your waking blest!”

She spake and rocked the shield; and in his arms
Sleep took them. But at midnight, when the Bear
Wheels to his setting, in Orion's front
Whose shoulder then beams broadest; Here sent,
Mistress of wiles, two huge and hideous things,
Snakes with their scales of azure all on end,

To the broad portal of the chamber-door,
All to devour the infant Heracles.
They, all their length uncoiled upon the floor,
Writhed on to their blood-feast; a baleful light
Gleamed in their eyes, rank venom they spat forth.
But when with lambent tongues they neared the cot,
Alcmena's babes (for Zeus was watching all)
Woke, and through all the chamber there was light.
And Iphicles—so soon as he descried
The fell brutes peering o'er the hollow shield,
And saw their merciless fangs—cried lustily,
And kicked away his coverlid of down
Fain to escape. But Heracles, he clung
Round them with warlike hands, in iron grasp
Prisoning the two: his clutch upon their throat,
The deadly snake's laboratory, where
He brews such poisons as e'en heaven abhors.
They twined and twisted round the babe that, born
After long travail, ne'er had shed a tear
E'en in his nursery; but they soon let go,
For powerless seemed their spines. Alcmena heard,
While her lord slept, the crying, and awoke.

“Amphitryon, up: chill fears take hold on me.
Up: stay not to put sandals on thy feet.
Hear'st thou our child, our younger, how he cries?

Seest thou yon walls illumed at dead of night,
But not by morn's pure beam? I know, I know,
Sweet lord, that some strange thing is happening here."

She spake; and he, upleaping at her call,
Made swiftly for the sword of quaint device
That aye hung dangling o'er his cedarn couch:
And he was reaching at his span-new belt,
The scabbard (one huge piece of lotus-wood)
Poised on his arm; when suddenly the night
Spread out her hands, and all was dark again.
Then cried he to his slaves, whose sleep was deep:
"Quick, slaves of mine; fetch fire from yonder hearth:
And force with all your strength the doorbolts back!
Up, loyal-hearted slaves: the master calls."

Forth came at once the slaves with lighted lamps.
The house was all astir with hurrying feet.
But when they saw the suckling Heracles
With the two brutes grasped firm in his soft hands,
They shouted with one voice. But he must shew
The reptiles to Amphitryon; held aloft
His hands in childish glee, and laughed and laid
At his sire's feet the monsters still in death.

Then did Alcmena to her bosom take

The terror-blanch'd and passionate Iphicles:
Cradling the other in a lambswool quilt,
Her lord once more bethought him of his rest.

Now cocks had thrice sung out that night was o'er.
Then went Alcmena forth and told the thing
To Teiresias the seer, whose words were truth,
And bade him rede her what the end should be:—
'And if the gods bode mischief, hide it not,
Pitying, from me: man shall not thus avoid
The doom that Fate upon her distaff spins.
Son of Eueres, thou hast ears to hear.'

Thus spake the queen, and thus he made reply:
"Mother of monarchs, Perseus' child, take heart;
And look but on the fairer side of things.
For by the precious light that long ago
Left tenantless these eyes, I swear that oft
Achaia's maidens, as when eve is high
They mould the silken yarn upon their lap,
Shall tell Alcmena's story: blest art thou
Of women. Such a man in this thy son
Shall one day scale the star-encumbered heaven:
His amplitude of chest bespeaks him lord
Of all the forest beasts and all mankind.
Twelve tasks accomplished he must dwell with Zeus;

His flesh giv'n over to Trachinian fires ;
And son-in-law be hailed of those same gods
Who sent you skulking brutes to slay thy babe.
Lo! the day cometh when the fawn shall couch
In the wolf's lair, nor fear the spiky teeth
That would not harm him. But, O lady, keep
Yon smouldering fire alive; prepare you piles
Of fuel, bramble-sprays or fern or furze
Or pear-boughs dried with swinging in the wind:
And let the kindled wild-wood burn those snakes
At midnight, when they looked to slay thy babe.
And let at dawn some handmaid gather up
The ashes of the fire, and diligently
Convey and cast each remnant o'er the stream
Faced by clov'n rocks, our boundary: then return
Nor look behind. And purify your home
First with sheer sulphur, rain upon it then,
(Chaplets of olive wound about your heads,)
Innocuous water, and the custom'd salt.*
Lastly, to Zeus almighty slay a boar:
So shall ye vanquish all your enemies."

Spake Teiresias, and wheeling (though his years
Weighed on him sorely) gained his ivory car.
And Heracles as some young orchard-tree
Grew up, Amphitryon his reputed sire.

Old Linus taught him letters, Phœbus' child,
A dauntless toiler by the midnight lamp.
And all the arts that Argive wrestlers ken,
Hipe and cross-buttock, all that bruisers use
Terrific in their gauntlets, and whate'er
Tricks of his trade the boxer-wrestler tries,
His frame with earth laid parallel: all such lore
Phocian Harpalicus gave him, Hermes' son:
Whom no man might behold while yet far off
And wait his armèd onset undismayed:
A brow so truculent roofed so grim a face.
To launch, and steer in safety round the goal,
Chariot and steed, and damage ne'er a wheel,
This the lad learned of fond Amphitryon's self.
Many a fair prize from listed warriors he
Had won on Argive racegrounds; yet the car
Whereon he sat came still unshattered home,
What gaps were in his harness time had made.
Then with couch'd lance to reach the foe, his targe
Covering his rear, and bide the biting sword;
Or, on the warpath, place his ambushade,
Marshal his lines and rally his cavaliers;
This knightly Castor learned him, erst exiled
From Argos, when her realms with all their wealth
Of vineyards fell to Tydeus, who received
Her and her chariots at Adrastus' hand.

Amongst the Heroes none was Castor's match
Till age had dimmed the glory of his youth.

Such tutors this fond mother gave her son.
The stripling's bed was at his father's side,
One after his own heart, a lion's skin.
His dinner, roast meat, with a loaf that filled
A Dorian basket, you might safely say
Had satisfied a delver; and to close
The day he took, sans fire, a scanty meal.
A simple frock went halfway down his leg:

* * * * *

IDYLL XXV.

Heracles the Lion Slayer.

* * * * *

TO whom thus spake the herdsman of the herd,
Pausing a moment from his handiwork:
“Friend, I will solve thy questions, for I fear
The angry looks of Hermes of the roads.
No dweller in the skies is wroth as he,
With him who saith the asking traveller nay.

“Lo! the fleeced flocks of royal Augeas
One pasture pastures not, nor one fence bounds.
They wander, look you, some by Elissus’ banks
Or god-belov’d Alpheus’ sacred stream,
Some by Buprasium, where the grape abounds,
Some here: their folds stand separate. But before
His herds, though they be myriad, yonder glades
That belt the broad lake round lie fresh and fair
For ever: for the low-lying meadows take
The dew, and teem with herbage honeysweet,

To lend new vigour to the hornèd kine.
Here on thy right their stalls thou canst descry
By the flowing river, for all eyes to see:
Here, where the platans blossom all the year,
And glimmers green the olive that enshrines
Rural Apollo, most august of gods.
Hard by, fair mansions have been reared for us
His herdsmen; us who guard with might and main
His riches that are more than tongue may tell:
Casting our seed o'er fallows thrice upturn'd
Or four times by the share; the bounds whereof
Well do the delvers know, whose busy feet
Troop to his wine-vats in fair summer-time.
Yea, all these acres gracious Augeas owns,
These corn-clad uplands and these orchards green,
Far as yon ledges whence the cataracts leap.
Here do we haunt, here toil, as is the wont
Of labourers in the fields, the livelong day.
But prythee tell me thou—so shalt thou best
Serve thine own interests—wherefore art thou here?
In quest of Augeas, or of one a slave
That serves him? I can tell thee and I will
All thou would'st know: for of no churlish blood
Thou camest, nor wert nurtured as a churl:
That read I in thy stateliness of form;
The sons of heaven move thus among mankind."

Then answered him the warrior son of Zeus.
"Yea, veteran, I would see the Epean King
Augeas; this need constrain'd me and I came.
If he bides there amongst his citizens,
Ruling the folk, determining the laws,
Look, father; bid some serf to be my guide,
Some honoured master-worker in the fields,
Who to shrewd questions shrewdly can reply.
Are not we made dependent each on each?"

To him the good old swain made answer thus:
"Stranger, some god hath timed thy visit here.
For hither Augeas, offspring of the Sun,
Came, with young Phyleus splendid in his strength,
But yesterday from the city, to review
(Not in one day) his multitudinous wealth.
Methinks e'en princes say within themselves,
'The safeguard of the flock's the master's eye.'
But haste, we'll seek him: to my own fold I
Will pilot thee; there haply find the King."

He said and went in front: but ponder'd much
(As he survey'd the lion-skin and the club,
Itself an armful) whence this stranger came;
And fain had asked. But fear recall'd the words
That trembled on his lip, the fear to say

Aught that his fiery friend might take amiss.
For who can fathom all his fellow's mind?

The dogs perceived their coming, yet far off:
They scented flesh, they heard the thud of feet:
And with wild gallop, baying furiously,
Ran at Amphitryon's son: but feebly whined
And fawned upon the old man at his side.
Then Heracles, just lifting from the ground
A pebble, scared them home, and truculently
Cursed the whole pack; and having stopped their din
(Inly rejoiced, nathless, to see them guard
So well an absent master's house) he spoke:

“Lo! what a friend the royal gods have given
Man in the dog! A trusty servant he!
Had he withal an understanding heart,
To teach him when to rage and when forbear,
What brute could claim like praise? But, lacking wit,
'Tis but a passionate random-raving thing.”

He spake: the dogs ran scurrying to their lairs.
And now the sun wheeled round his westering car
And led still evening on: from every field
Came thronging the fat flocks to bield and byre.
Then in their thousands, drove on drove, the kine

Came into view ; as rainclouds, onward driven
By stress of gales, the west or mighty north,
Come up o'er all the heaven ; and none may count
And nought may stay them as they sweep through air ;
Such multitudes the storm's strength drives ahead,
Such multitudes climb surging in the rear—
So in swift sequence drove succeeded drove,
And all the champaign, all the highways swarmed
With tramping oxen ; all the sumptuous leas
Rang with their lowing. Soon enough the stalls
Were populous with awkward-gaited kine,
Soon did the sheep lie folded in their folds.
Then of that legion none stood idle, none
Gaped listless at the herd, with nought to do :
But one drew near and milked them, binding clogs
Of wood with leathern thongs around their feet :
One brought, all hungering for the milk they loved,
The longing young ones to the longing dams.
One held the pail, one press'd the dainty cheese,
Or drove the bulls home, sunder'd from the kine.
From stall to stall advancing, Augeas saw
What revenue his herdsmen brought him in.
With him his son survey'd the royal wealth,
And, strong of limb and purpose, Heracles.
And, though the heart within him was as steel,
Framed to withstand all shocks, Amphitryon's son

Gazed in amazement on those thronging kine ;
For none had deemed or dreamed that one, or ten,
Whose wealth was more than regal, owned those tribes :
Such huge largess the Sun had given his child,
First of mankind for multitude of flocks.
The Sun himself gave increase day by day
To his child's herds : whate'er diseases spoil
The farmer, came not there ; his kine increased
In multitude and value year by year :
None cast her young, or bare unfruitful males.
Three hundred bulls, white-pasterned, crumple-horned,
Ranged amid these, and eke two hundred roans,
Sires of a race to be : and twelve besides
Herded amongst them, sacred to the Sun.
Their skin was white as swansdown, and they moved
Like monarchs through the awkward-gaited kine.
Scorning the herd in uttermost disdain
They cropped the green grass in untrodden fields :
And when from the dense jungle to the plain
Leapt a wild beast, in quest of vagrant cows ;
Scenting him first, the twelve went forth to war.
Stern was their bellowing, in their eye sat death.
Foremost of all for mettle and for might
And pride of heart loomed Phaeton : him the swains
Regarded as a star ; so bright he shone
Among the herd, the cynosure of eyes.

He, soon as he descried the sun-dried skin
Of the grim lion, made at Heracles
(Whose eye was on him)—fain to make his crest
And sturdy brow acquainted with his flanks.
Straight the prince grasped him with no tender grasp
By the left horn, and bowed that giant bulk
To earth, neck foremost: then, by pressure brought
To bear upon his shoulder, forced him back.
The web of muscles that enwraps the nerves
Stood out from the brute's fore-arm plain to see.
Marvelled the King, and Phyleus his brave son,
At the strange prowess of Amphitryon's child.

Then townwards, leaving straight that rich champaign,
Stout Heracles his comrade, Phyleus fared;
And soon as they had gained the paven road,
Making their way hotfooted o'er a path
(Not o'er-conspicuous in the dim green wood)
That left the farm and threaded through the vines,
Then spake unto the child of Zeus most high,
Who followed in his footsteps, Augeas' son,
O'er his right shoulder glancing pleasantly.

“O stranger, as some old familiar tale
I seem to cast thy history in my mind.
For there came one to Argos, young and tall,

By birth a Greek from Helice-on-seas,
Who told this tale before a multitude:
How that an Argive in his presence slew
A fearful lion-beast, the dread and death
Of herdsmen; which inhabited a den
Or cavern by the grove of Nemean Zeus.
He may have come from sacred Argos' self,
Or Tiryns, or Mycenæ: what know I?
But thus he told his tale, and said the slayer
Was (if my memory serves me) Perseus' son.
Methinks no islander had dared that deed
Save thee: the lion's skin that wraps thy ribs
Argues full well some gallant feat of arms.
But tell me, warrior, first—that I may know
If my prophetic soul speak truth or not—
Art thou the man of whom that stranger Greek
Spoke in my hearing? Have I guessed aright?
How slew you single-handed that fell beast?
How came it among rivered Nemea's glens?
For none such monster could the eagerest eye
Find in all Greece: Greece harbours bear and boar,
And deadly wolf: but not this larger game.
'Twas this that made his listeners marvel then:
They deemed he told them travellers' tales, to win
By random words applause from standers-by."

Then Phyleus from the mid-road edged away,

That both might walk abreast, and he might catch
More at his ease what fell from Heracles:
Who journeying now alongside thus began:—

“On the prior matter, child of Augeas,
Thine own unaided wit hath ruled aright.
But all that monster’s history, how it fell,
Fain would I tell thee who hast ears to hear,
Save only whence it came: for none of all
The Argive host could read that riddle right.
Some god, we dimly guessed, our niggard vows
Resenting, had let loose upon the realm
Of Phoroneus this scourge of humankind.
On peopled Pisa plunging like a flood
The brute ran riot: notably it cost
Its neighbours of Bembina woes untold.
And here Eurystheus bade me try my first
Passage of arms, and slay that fearsome thing.
So with my buxom bow and quiver lined
With arrows I set forth: my left hand held
My club, a beetling olive’s stalwart trunk
And shapely, still environed in its bark:
This hand had torn from holiest Helicon
The tree entire, with all its fibrous roots.
And finding soon the lion’s whereabouts,
I grasped my bow, and on the bent horn slipped

The string, and laid thereon the shaft of death.
And, now all eyes, I watched for that fell thing,
In hopes to view him ere he spied out me.
But midday came, and nowhere could I see
One footprint of the beast or hear his roar:
And, trust me, none appeared of whom to ask,
Herdsman or labourer, in the furrowed lea;
For wan dismay kept each man in his hut.
Still on I footed, searching thro' and thro'
The leafy mountain-passes, till I saw
The creature, and forthwith essayed my strength.
Gorged from some gory carcass, on he stalked
At eve towards his lair; his grizzled mane,
Shoulders, and grim glad visage, all adrip
With carnage; and he licked his bearded lips.
I, crouched among the shadows of the trees
On the green hill-top, waited his approach,
And as he came I aimed at his left flank.
The barbèd shaft sped idly, nor could pierce
The flesh, but glancing dropped on the green grass.
He, wondering, raised forthwith his tawny head,
And ran his eyes o'er all the vicinage,
And snarled and gave to view his cavernous throat.
Meanwhile I levelled yet another shaft,
Ill pleased to think my first had fled in vain.
In the mid-chest I smote him, where the lungs

Are seated: still the arrow sank not in,
But landed imbecilely at his feet.
Once more was I preparing, sore chagrined,
To draw the bowstring, when the ravenous beast
Glaring around espied me, lashed his sides
With his huge tail, and opened war at once.
Swelled his vast neck, his dun locks stood on end
With rage: his spine moved sinuous as a bow,
Till all his weight hung poised on flank and loin.
And e'en as, when a chariot-builder bends
With practised skill his shafts of splintered fig,
Hot from the fire, to be his axle-wheels;
Flies the tough-rinded sapling from the hands
That shape it, at a bound recoiling far:
So from far-off the dread beast, all of a heap,
Sprang on me, hungering for my life-blood. I
Thrust with one hand my arrows in his face
And my doffed doublet, while the other raised
My seasoned cudgel o'er his crest, and drave
Full at his temples, breaking clean in twain
On the fourfooted warrior's hairy scalp
My club; and ere he reached me, down he fell.
Headlong he fell, and poised on tremulous feet
Stood, his head wagging, and his eyes grown dim;
For the shrewd stroke had shattered brain and bone.
I, marking him beside himself with pain,

Fell, ere recovering he should breathe again,
At vantage on his solid sinewy neck,
My bow and woven quiver thrown aside.
With iron clasp I gripped him from the rear
(His talons else had torn me) and, my foot
Set on him, forced to earth by dint of heel
His hinder parts, my flanks entrenched the while
Behind his fore-arm: till his thews were stretched
And strained, and on his haunches stark he stood
And lifeless: hell received his hideous ghost.
Then with myself I counselled how to strip
From off the dead beast's limbs his shaggy hide,
A task full onerous, since I found it proof
Against all blows of steel or stone or wood.
Some god at last inspired me with the thought,
With his own claws to rend the lion's skin.
With these I flayed him soon, and sheathed and armed
My limbs against the shocks of murderous war.
Thus, sir, the Nemean lion met his end,
Erewhile the constant curse of beast and man."

IDYLL XXVI.

The Bacchanals.

A GAVE of the vermeil-tinted cheek
And Ino and Autonoe marshalled erst
Three bands of revellers under one hill-peak.
They plucked the wild-oak's matted foliage first,
Lush ivy then, and creeping asphodel;
And reared therewith twelve shrines amid the untrodden
fell:

To Semele three, to Dionysus nine.

Next, from a vase drew offerings subtly wrought,
And prayed and placed them on each fresh green
shrine;

So by the god, who loved such tribute, taught.
Perched on the sheer cliff, Pentheus could espy
All, in a mastick hoar ensconced that grew thereby.

Autonoa marked him, and with frightful cries
Flew to make havoc of those mysteries weird
That must not be profaned by vulgar eyes.

Her frenzy frenzied all. Then Pentheus feared
And fled: and in his wake those damsels three,
Each with her trailing robe up-gathered to the knee.

“What will ye, dames,” quoth Pentheus. “Thou
shalt guess

At what we mean, untold,” Autonoa said.

Agave moaned—as moans a lioness

Over her young one—as she clutched his head:

While Ino on the carcass fairly laid

Her heel, and wrenched away shoulder and shoulder-
blade.

Autonoa's turn came next: and what remained

Of flesh their damsels did among them share,

And back to Thebes they came all carnage-stained,

And planted not a king but aching there.

Warned by this tale, let no man dare defy

Great Bacchus; lest a death more awful he should
die,

And, when he counts nine years or scarcely ten,
Rush to his ruin. May I pass my days
Uprightly, and be loved of upright men!

And take this motto, all who covet praise:
(’Twas Ægis-bearing Zeus that spake it first:)
‘The godly’s seed fares well: the wicked’s is accurst.’

Now bless ye Bacchus, whom on mountain snows,
Prisoned in his thigh till then, the Almighty laid.
And bless ye fairfaced Semele, and those
Her sisters, hymned of many a hero-maid,
Who wrought, by Bacchus fired, a deed which none
May gainsay—who shall blame that which a god hath
done?

IDYLL XXVII.

A Countryman's Wooing.

DAPHNIS. A MAIDEN.

THE MAIDEN.

HOW fell sage Helen? through a swain like thee.

DAPHNIS.

Less coy, my Helen freely kisses me.

THE MAIDEN.

Satyr, don't boast: what's idler than a kiss?

DAPHNIS.

Yet in such pleasant idling there is bliss.

THE MAIDEN.

I'll wash my mouth: where go thy kisses then?

DAPHNIS.

Wash, and return it—to be kissed again.

THE MAIDEN.

Caress your oxen, not unhandled maids.

DAPHNIS.

Don't boast; for beauty is a dream that fades.

THE MAIDEN.

Past grapes are grapes: dead roses keep their smell.

DAPHNIS.

Come to yon olives: I've a tale to tell.

THE MAIDEN.

Not I: you fooled me with smooth words before.

DAPHNIS.

Come to yon elms, and hear me pipe once more.

THE MAIDEN.

Pipe to yourself: I rate your piping low.

DAPHNIS.

Fie! shall a maiden flout the Paphian so?

THE MAIDEN.

She's nought to me, if Artemis' favour last.

DAPHNIS.

Hush, ere she smite you and entrap you fast.

THE MAIDEN.

And let her smite me, trap me as she will:
My Artemis shall be my saviour still.
Unhand me! What, again? I'll tear your lip.

DAPHNIS.

Can you, could maiden e'er, give Love the slip?

THE MAIDEN.

You are his bondslave, but not I by Pan!

DAPHNIS.

I doubt he'll give thee to a worser man.

THE MAIDEN.

Many have wooed me, but I fancied none.

DAPHNIS.

Till among many came the destined *one*.

THE MAIDEN.

Wedlock is woe. Dear love, what can I do?

DAPHNIS.

Woe it is not, but joy and dancing too.

THE MAIDEN.

Wives dread their husbands: so I've heard it said.

DAPHNIS.

Nay, they rule o'er them. What does woman dread?

THE MAIDEN.

Then children—Eileithya's dart is keen.

DAPHNIS.

But the deliverer, Artemis, is your queen.

THE MAIDEN.

And bearing children all our grace destroys.

DAPHNIS.

Bear them and shine more lustrous in your boys.

THE MAIDEN.

Should I say yes, what dower awaits me then?

DAPHNIS.

Thine are my cattle, thine this glade and glen.

THE MAIDEN.

Swear not to wed, then leave me in my woe?

DAPHNIS.

Not I by Pan, though thou should'st bid me go.

THE MAIDEN.

And shall a cot be mine, with farm and fold?

DAPHNIS.

Thy cot's half-built, thy sheep are on the wold.

THE MAIDEN.

What tale to my old father shall I tell?

DAPHNIS.

Soon as he hears my name he'll like it well.

THE MAIDEN.

Say it: I like a name, a pleasant one.

DAPHNIS.

I'm Daphnis, Lycid's and Nomaia's son.

THE MAIDEN.

Well-born indeed: and not less so am I.

DAPHNIS.

I know—Menalcas' daughter may look high.

THE MAIDEN.

That grove, where stands your sheepfold, shew me
please.

DAPHNIS.

Nay look, how green how tall my cypress-trees.

THE MAIDEN.

Graze, goats: I go to learn the herdsman's trade.

DAPHNIS.

Feed, bulls: I shew my cospes to my maid.

THE MAIDEN.

Sir, why abstract my kerchief? you're too bold.

DAPHNIS.

The treasures hidden here I'll first unfold.

THE MAIDEN.

I'm petrified, by Pan! Unhand me pray!

DAPHNIS.

Why be so timorous? Pretty coward, stay.

THE MAIDEN.

This seat's all dusty and has soiled my gown.

DAPHNIS.

Then put this fleece beneath you and sit down.

THE MAIDEN.

And you've purloined my kirtle. What do you mean?

DAPHNIS.

I vow this kirtle to the Paphian queen.

THE MAIDEN.

Stay, miscreant—some one comes—I heard a noise.

DAPHNIS.

'Tis but the green trees whispering of our joys.

THE MAIDEN.

Oh, and my cloak is torn, and won't stay on.

DAPHNIS.

Well, a far ampler shall be yours anon.

THE MAIDEN.

Generous just now, you'll one day grudge me bread.

DAPHNIS.

Ah! for thy sake my life-blood I could shed.

THE MAIDEN.

Artemis, forgive! Thy eremite breaks her vow.

DAPHNIS.

Love, and Love's mother, claim a calf and cow.

THE MAIDEN.

Oh, and must all my maiden sports be o'er?

DAPHNIS.

Be wife and mother; but a maid no more.

Thus interchanging whispered talk the pair,
Their faces all aglow, long lingered there.
At length the hour arrived when they must part.
With downcast eyes, but sunshine in her heart,
She went to tend her flock; while Daphnis ran
Back to his herded bulls, a happy man.

IDYLL XXVIII.

The Distaff.

DISTAFF, blithely whirling distaff, azure-eyed
Athene's gift

To the sex the aim and object of whose lives is house-
hold thrift,

Seek with me the gorgeous city raised by Neilus, where
a plain

Roof of pale-green rush o'er-arches Aphrodite's hallowed
fane.

Thither ask I Zeus to waft me, fain to see my old
friend's face,

Nicias, o'er whose birth presided every passion-breathing
Grace;

Fain to meet his answering welcome; and anon deposit
thee

In his lady's hands, thou marvel of laborious ivory.
Many a manly robe ye'll fashion, and much floating
maiden's gear;

Nay, should e'er the fleecy mothers twice within the
selfsame year
Yield their wool in yonder pasture, Theugenis of the
dainty feet
Would perform the double labour: matron's cares to
her are sweet.
To an idler or a trifier I had verily been loth
To resign thee, O my distaff, for the same land bred
us both:
In the land Corinthian Archias built aforetime, thou
hadst birth,
In our island's core and marrow, whence have sprung
the kings of earth:
To the home I now transfer thee of a man who knows
full well
Every craft whereby men's bodies dire diseases may
repel:
There to live in sweet Miletus. Lady of the Distaff she
Shall be named, and oft reminded of her poet-friend
by thee:
Men shall look on thee and murmur to each other, 'Lo!
how small
Was the gift, and yet how precious! Friendship's gifts
are priceless all.'

IDYLL XXIX.

Æolus.

‘SINCERITY comes with the wine-cup,’ my dear :
Then now o’er our wine-cups let us be sincere.
My soul’s treasured secret to you I’ll impart ;
It is this ; that I never won fairly your heart.
One half of my life, I am conscious, has flown ;
The residue lives on your image alone.
You are kind, and I dream I’m in paradise then ;
You are angry, and lo ! all is darkness again.
It is right to torment one who loves you ? Obey
Your elder ; ’twere best ; and you’ll thank me one day.
Settle down in one nest on one tree (taking care
That no cruel reptile can clamber up there) ;
As it is with your lovers you’re fairly perplexed ;
One day you choose one bough, another the next.
Whoe’er at all struck by your graces appears,
Is more to you straight than the comrade of years ;
While he’s like the friend of a day put aside ;
For the breath of your nostrils, I think, is your pride.

Form a friendship, for life, with some likely young lad ;
So doing, in honour your name shall be had.
Nor would Love use you hardly ; though lightly can he
Bind strong men in chains, and has wrought upon me
Till the steel is as wax—But I'm longing to press
That exquisite mouth with a brother's caress.

No? Reflect that you're older each year than the
last ;
That we all must grow gray, and the wrinkles come fast.
Reflect, ere you spurn me, that youth at his sides
Wears wings ; and once gone, all pursuit he derides :
Nor are men over keen to catch charms as they fly.
Think of this and be gentle, be loving as I :
When your years are maturer, we two shall be then
The pair in the Iliad over again.
But if you consign all my words to the wind
And say, 'Why annoy me? you're not to my mind,'
I—who lately in quest of the Gold Fruit had sped
For your sake, or of Cerberus guard of the dead—
Though you called me, would ne'er stir a foot from
my door,
For my love and my sorrow thenceforth will be o'er.

IDYLL XXX.

The Death of Adonis.

CYTHERA saw Adonis
And knew that he was dead;
She marked the brow, all grisly now,
The cheek no longer red;
And "Bring the boar before me"
Unto her Loves she said.

Forthwith her winged attendants
Ranged all the woodland o'er,
And found and bound in fetters
Threefold the grisly boar:
One dragged him at a rope's end
E'en as a vanquished foe;
One went behind and drave him
And smote him with his bow:
On paced the creature feebly;
He feared Cythera so.

To him said Aphrodite :

“So, worst of beasts, ’twas you
Who rent that thigh asunder,
Who him that loved me slew?”
And thus the beast made answer :

“Cythera, hear me swear
By thee, by him that loved thee,
And by these bonds I wear,
And them before whose hounds I ran—
I meant no mischief to the man
Who seemed to thee so fair.

“As on a carven statue
Men gaze, I gazed on him ;
I seemed on fire with mad desire
To kiss that offered limb :
My ruin, Aphrodite,
Thus followed from my whim.

“Now therefore take and punish
And fairly cut away
These all unruly tusks of mine ;
For to what end serve they ?
And if thine indignation
Be not content with this,

Cut off the mouth that ventured
To offer him a kiss"—

But Aphrodite pitied
And bade them loose his chain.
The boar from that day forward
Still followed in her train;
Nor ever to the wildwood
Attempted to return,
But in the focus of Desire
Preferred to burn and burn.

IDYLL XXXI.

Loves.

AH for this the most accursed, unendurable of ills!
Nigh two months a fevered fancy for a maid my
bosom fills.

Fair she is, as other damsels: but for what the simplest
swain

Claims from the demurest maiden, I must sue and sue
in vain.

Yet doth now this thing of evil my longsuffering heart
beguile,

Though the utmost she vouchsafes me is the shadow
of a smile:

And I soon shall know no respite, have no solace e'en
in sleep.

Yesterday I watched her pass me, and from down-dropt
eyelids peep

At the face she dared not gaze on—every moment blush-
ing more—

And my love took hold upon me as it never took before.

Home I went a wounded creature, with a gnawing
at my heart;
And unto the soul within me did my bitterness impart.

“Soul, why deal with me in this wise? Shall thy
folly know no bound?
Canst thou look upon these temples, with their locks of
silver crowned,
And still deem thee young and shapely? Nay, my
soul, let us be sage;
Act as they that have already sipped the wisdom-cup
of age.
Men have loved and have forgotten. Happiest of all
is he
To the lover’s woes a stranger, from the lover’s fetters
free:
Lightly his existence passes, as a wild-deer fleeting
fast:
Tamed, it may be, he shall voyage in a maiden’s wake
at last:
Still today ’tis his to revel with his mates in boyhood’s
flowers.
As to thee, thy brain and marrow passion evermore
devours,
Prey to memories that haunt thee e’en in visions of
the night;

And a year shall scarcely pluck thee from thy miserable
plight.”

Such and divers such reproaches did I heap upon my
soul.

And my soul in turn made answer:—“Whoso deems
he can control

Wily love, the same shall lightly gaze upon the stars
of heaven

And declare by what their number overpasses seven
times seven.

Will I, nill I, I may never from my neck his yoke
unloose.

So, my friend, a god hath willed it: he whose plots
could outwit Zeus,

And the queen whose home is Cyprus. I, a leaflet
of to-day,

I whose breath is in my nostrils, am I wrong to own
his sway?”

FRAGMENT FROM THE "BERENICE."

YE that would fain net fish and wealth withal,
For bare existence harrowing yonder mere,
To this our Lady slay at even-fall
That holy fish, which, since it hath no peer
For gloss and sheen, the dwellers about here
Have named the Silver Fish. This done, let down
Your nets, and draw them up, and never fear
To find them empty * * * *

EPIGRAMS AND EPITAPHS.

I.

YOURS be yon dew-steep'd roses, yours be yon
Thick-clustering ivy, maids of Helicon:
Thine, Pythian Pæan, that dark-foliaged bay;
With such thy Delphian crags thy front array.
This horn'd and shaggy ram shall stain thy shrine,
Who crops e'en now the feathering turpentine.

II.

TO Pan doth white-limbed Daphnis offer here
(He once piped sweetly on his herdsman's flute)
His reeds of many a stop, his barbèd spear,
And scrip, wherein he held his hoards of fruit.

III.

DAPHNIS, thou slumberest on the leaf-strewn lea,
Thy frame at rest, thy springes newly spread
O'er the fell-side. But two are hunting thee:
Pan, and Priapus with his fair young head
Hung with wan ivy. See! they come, they leap
Into thy lair—fly, fly!—shake off the coil of sleep!

IV.

FOR yon oaken avenue, swain, you must steer,
Where a statue of figwood, you'll see, has been set:
It has never been barked, has three legs and no ear;
But I think there is life in the patriarch yet.
He is handsomely shrined within fair chapel-walls;
Where, fringed with sweet cypress and myrtle and
bay,
A stream ever-fresh from the rock's hollow falls,
And the ringleted vine her ripe store doth display:
And the blackbirds, those shrill-piping songsters of
spring,
Wake the echoes with wild inarticulate song:
And the notes of the nightingale plaintively ring,
As she pours from her dun throat her lay sweet and
strong.
Sitting there, to Priapus, the gracious one, pray
That the lore he has taught me I soon may unlearn:
Say I'll give him a kid, and in case he says nay
To this offer, three victims to him will I burn;
A kid, a fleeced ram, and a lamb sleek and fat;
He will listen, mayhap, to my prayers upon that.

V.

PRYTHEE, sing something sweet to me—you that
can play

First and second at once. Then I too will essay
To croak on the pipes: and yon lad shall salute
Our ears with a melody breathed through his flute.
In the cave by the green oak our watch we will keep,
And goatish old Pan we'll defraud of his sleep.

VI.

POOOR Thyrsis! What boots it to weep out thine
eyes?

Thy kid was a fair one, I own:
But the wolf with his cruel claw made her his prize,
And to darkness her spirit hath flown.
Do the dogs cry? What boots it? In spite of their cries
There is left of her never a bone.

VII.

For a Statue of Aesculapius.

FAR as Miletus travelled Pæan's son;
There to be guest of Nicias, guest of one
Who heals all sickness; and who still reveres
Him, for his sake this cedarn image rears.
The sculptor's hand right well did Nicias fill;
And here the sculptor lavished all his skill.

VIII.

Ortho's Epitaph.

FRIEND, Ortho of Syracuse gives thee this charge :
 Never venture out, drunk, on a wild winter's night.
 I did so and died. My possessions were large ;
 Yet the turf that I'm clad with is strange to me quite.

IX.

Epitaph of Cleonicus.

MAN, husband existence: ne'er launch on the sea
 Out of season: our tenure of life is but frail.
 Think of poor Cleonicus: for Phasos sailed he
 From the valleys of Syria, with many a bale:
 With many a bale, ocean's tides he would stem
 When the Pleiads were sinking; and he sank with them.

X.

For a Statue of the Muses.

TO you this marble statue, maids divine,
 Xenocles raised, one tribute unto nine.
 Your votary all admit him: by this skill
 He gat him fame: and you he honours still.

XI.

Epitaph of Eusthenes.

HERE the shrewd physiognomist Eusthenes lies,
 Who could tell all your thoughts by a glance
 at your eyes.

A stranger, with strangers his honoured bones rest;
 They valued sweet song, and he gave them his best.
 All the honours of death doth the poet possess:
 If a small one, they mourned for him nevertheless.

XII.

For a Tripod Erected by Damoteles to Bacchus.

THE precentor Damoteles, Bacchus, exalts
 Your tripod, and, sweetest of deities, you.
 He was champion of men, if his boyhood had faults;
 And he ever loved honour and seemliness too.

XIII.

For a Statue of Anacreon.

THIS statue, stranger, scan with earnest gaze;
 And, home returning, say "I have beheld
 Anacreon, in Teos; him whose lays
 Were all unmatched among our sires of eld."
 Say further: "Youth and beauty pleased him best;"
 And all the man will fairly stand exprest.

XIV.

Epitaph of Eurymedon.

THOU hast gone to the grave, and abandoned thy son
 Yet a babe, thy own manhood but scarcely begun.
 Thou art throned among gods: and thy country will
 take
 Thy child to her heart, for his brave father's sake.

XV.

Another.

PROVE, traveller, now, that you honour the brave
 Above the poltroon, when he's laid in the grave,
 By murmuring, 'Peace to Eurymedon dead.'
 The turf should lie light on so sacred a head.

XVI.

For a Statue of the Heavenly Aphrodite.

APHRODITE stands here; she of heavenly birth;
 Not that base one who's wooed by the children
 of earth.

'Tis a goddess; bow down. And one blemishless all,
 Chrysogone, placed her in Amphicles' hall:
 Chrysogone's heart, as her children, was his,
 And each year they knew better what happiness is.
 For, Queen, at life's outset they made thee their friend;
 Religion is policy too in the end.

XVII.

To Epicharmus.

READ these lines to Epicharmus. They are Dorian,
as was he

The sire of Comedy.

Of his proper self bereavèd, Bacchus, unto thee we rear

His brazen image here;

We in Syracuse who sojourn, elsewhere born. Thus
much we can

Do for our countryman,

Mindful of the debt we owe him. For, possessing
ample store

Of legendary lore,

Many a wholesome word, to pilot youths and maids
thro' life, he spake:

We honour him for their sake.

XVIII.

Epitaph of Cleita, Nurse of Medeus.

THE babe Medeus to his Thracian nurse
This stone—inscribed *To Cleita*—reared in the
midhighway.

Her modest virtues oft shall men rehearse;

Who doubts it? is not 'Cleita's worth' a proverb to
this day?

XIX.

To Archilochus.

PAUSE, and scan well Archilochus, the bard of elder days.

By east and west

Alike's confest

The mighty lyrist's praise.

Delian Apollo loved him well, and well the sister-choir :

His songs were fraught

With subtle thought,

And matchless was his lyre.

XX.

Under a Statue of Peisander,

WHO WROTE THE LABOURS OF HERACLES.

HE whom ye gaze on was the first
That in quaint song the deeds rehearsed

Of him whose arm was swift to smite,

Who dared the lion to the fight :

That tale, so strange, so manifold,

Peisander of Cameirus told.

For this good work, thou may'st be sure,

His country placed him here,

In solid brass that shall endure

Through many a month and year.

XXI.

Epitaph of Hipponax.

BEHOLD Hipponax' burialplace,
 A true bard's grave.
 Approach it not, if you're a base
 And base-born knave.
 But if your sires were honest men
 And unblamed you,
 Sit down thereon serenely then,
 And eke sleep too.

Tuneful Hipponax rests him here.
 Let no base rascal venture near.
 Ye who rank high in birth and mind
 Sit down—and sleep, if so inclined.

XXII.

On his own Book.

NOT my namesake of Chios, but I, who belong
 To the Syracuse burghers, have sung you my song.
 I'm Praxagoras' son by Philinna the fair,
 And I never asked praise that was owing elsewhere.

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